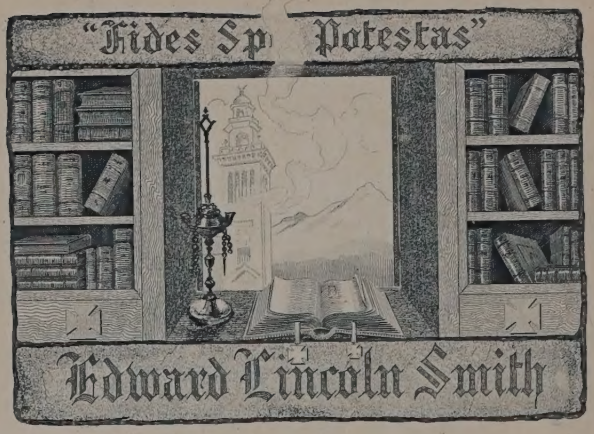
THE · GIFT · OF IMMORTALITY

Charles · Lewis Slattery



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The gift of immortality

Raymond F. West Memorial Lectures on Immortality, Human Conduct, and Human Destiny

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WHY WE MAY BELIEVE IN LIFE AFTER DEATH. By Charles Edward Jefferson. 1911.

THREE LORDS OF DESTINY. By Samuel McChord Crothers. 1913.

IS CONSCIENCE AN EMOTION? By Hastings Rashdall. 1914.

THE GIFT OF IMMORTALITY: A STUDY IN RESPONSIBILITY. By Charles Lewis Slattery, D.D. 1915.

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THE GIFT OF IMMORTALITY

Raymond F. West Memorial Lectures

THE GIFT OF IMMORTALITY

A Study in Responsibility

BY

CHARLES LEWIS SLATTERY, D.D.

RECTOR OF GRACE CHURCH IN NEW YORK

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PREFATORY NOTE

THIS volume represents the fourth of the series of Raymond F. West Memorial Lectures at the Leland Stanford Junior University. These lectures were delivered on September 30 and October 1 and 3, 1915, by Rev. Charles Lewis Slattery, D.D., rector of Grace Church in New York City, author of *The Master of the World*, *Life Beyond Life*, *The Light Within*, etc. The conditions of the lectureship are set forth in the following letter from its founders: —

In memory of our beloved son, Raymond Frederic West, a student in Leland Stanford Junior University, who was drowned in Eel River, in California, on January 18, 1906, before the completion of his college course, we wish to present to the trustees and authorities of the Leland Stanford Junior University, at Palo Alto, California, the honored Alma Mater of our son, the sum of ten thousand dollars ($10,000), to be

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held as a fund in perpetual trust, for the establishment of a lectureship on a plan similar to the Dudleian Lectures and the Ingersoll Lectures at Harvard University.

By this plan, in each collegiate year, or on each alternate year, at the discretion of the Board of Trustees, from one to three lectures shall be given on some phase of this subject: "Immortality, Human Conduct, and Human Destiny."

Such lectures shall not form a part of the usual college or university course, nor shall they be delivered by any professor or instructor in active service in the institution. Such lecturer may be a clergyman or a layman, a member of any ecclesiastical organization, or of none, but he should be a man of the highest personal character and of superior intellectual endowment. He shall be chosen by the Faculty and the Board of Trustees of said University in such manner as the Board of Trustees may determine, but the appointment in any case shall be made at least six months before the delivery of said lectures.

The above sum is to be safely invested, and the interest thereof is to be divided, at the discretion of the Board of Trustees, into two parts, the one

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an honorarium to the lecturer, the other for the publication of the said lectures or the gratuitous distribution of a number of copies of the same if published by the author.

The manuscript of the course of lectures shall become the property of the University, and shall be published by the University unless some other form of publication is more acceptable.

The course of lectures shall be known as the "Raymond F. West Memorial Lectures on Immortality, Human Conduct, and Human Destiny."

F. W. WEST,
MARY B. WEST.

SEATTLE, WASH.,
January 18, 1910.

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THE GIFT OF IMMORTALITY

I

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL TO IMMORTALITY

I

THERE are three roads by which one may approach the belief in immortality. The first is the road of argument. We are all convinced that thus far, in a sense which can be scientifically measured, the world has not discovered an infallible proof of immortal life. We cannot place immortality among such established scientific facts as gravitation. It belongs to another stratum of human

convictions. We must always have a large element of faith in order to rely upon the expectation of immortality. But faith is not irrational: reasons for our faith ought to be encouraged. Therefore, though we cannot prove immortality in any scientific or mathematical fashion, we may reason out its exceeding probability. We may, indeed, make it seem so probable that for our practical reason we may call it proved. The road which we travel in this process is the road of argument.

Another road by which we may approach the belief in immortality is imagination. This is the road on which great poets fare. The poets from time to time have dared to lift the veil, and, by ecstatic vision, have described what they have felt to be the truth about the

life beyond our present stage. John of Patmos, Bernard of Cluny, Dante of Florence, John Henry Newman, and many another have left the world their inspiring record. They attempt no argument, they scarcely ask assent to their words. They tell, in picturesque and figurative language, what they see and feel; and there they leave their account of the immortal life. It is the road of imagination.

The third road by which we may approach the belief in immortality is the road of practical experience. Here the life beyond death is assumed to be what the theologians and poets declare it to be. The supreme question is, What effect does a conviction of immortality have upon this life which we are now living? The moment we set foot upon

this road we know that it is no highway through the clouds; it is hard and firm, a dusty and noisy thoroughfare, with which we have daily familiarity. We may discover at length that to live as if there were immortal life stretching out before us is to give a new sense of certainty to all our convictions and hopes. In case the hypothesis, when put to the practical test, should prove to have a beneficial effect upon us, we should have this practical reason for trusting the hypothesis to be true. Thus, in a way, we should be gaining material for both the philosopher and the poet, though we ourselves be plodding along in the paths of everyday life.

It is this third road — the road of practical experience — which I purpose to travel in these lectures. I ask you to

reflect upon the responsibility which a belief in immortality throws back upon our present life, here and now; first, upon our lives as individuals; then, upon our corporate life in human society; and, finally, upon our lives as related to God.

II

The first question to ask is whether it is more than a pious fancy that belief in immortality has any effect upon our earthly life. The preliminary consideration is whether the people who think that they believe in immortality really believe in it. I have not the least doubt that a host of people who would say instantly that of course they believed in a life after death, do not really believe in it at all. That is, they are so absorbed in the busy lives which they are lead-

ing, and thus far they have been so free from dangerous illness and from blinding bereavement, that they have not really faced the subject. It has been lying among the remote dreams of humanity, like Church unity and permanent peace for the world, which make no demands on one's immediate faith. As they expect to get on very well without the assurance of Church unity or universal peace, so they are not truly depending upon immortality: they are content, as they often say, to live one life at a time.

Now, when a man really believes in immortality, his belief is of such a nature that he does not wait to be asked whether he believes in a future life; he proclaims it. He may proclaim it in words, after the manner of other enthu-

siasts; or he may, because of the depth of his feeling, say little about it, and leave the belief to be proclaimed in deeds. The late F. W. H. Myers, through interest in psychic research, became convinced, in what he thought a scientific way, that life goes on after death. It was not with him a hope, a trust, a faith; it was what he believed to be full evidence tested by the senses. With the manner by which he gained this assurance I have now nothing to do. You may think that he was grossly self-deceived. All I insist upon is that you grant that in Myers you have an example of a man who had suddenly awaked to a genuine conviction of immortality. Now, what difference did this conviction make? Let his friend William James give the answer: "Myers's char-

acter . . . grew stronger in every particular. . . . Brought up on literature and sentiment, something of a courtier, passionate, disdainful, and impatient naturally, he was made over again from the day when he took up psychical research seriously. He became learned in science, circumspect, democratic in sympathy, endlessly patient, and above all, happy. The fortitude of his last hours touched the heroic, so completely were the atrocious sufferings of his body cast into insignificance by his interest in the cause he lived for. When a man's pursuit gradually makes his face shine and grow handsome, you may be sure it is a worthy one. . . . Myers kept growing ever handsomer and stronger-looking." This is an illustration of what must happen to every man when, for

one reason or another, he passes from no faith, or a conventional faith, in immortality, into a robust and vital faith. It makes a difference in this life.

Sometimes this faith may be none the less real even when it is not conspicuously dwelt upon: it may be subconscious, the inheritance of one's ancestry and early teaching. It may be assumed in the same silent way in which we assume our power to breathe. This is the sort of faith in immortality which we find in reverent childhood. Last winter two children were sent from a home where their father lay dead, that they might be spared association with death and remember their father only alive. On the way to the country home which was to receive them, they stopped to buy flowers. These they sent back; and

in each box were sealed envelopes containing obviously quite long letters addressed: "To Father from Mary. Not to be opened"; "To Father from John. Not to be opened." There they had doubtless written their love with the childlike faith that in some way their father would know. This is a faith in immortality quite unlike the faith which Myers acquired; but it has the same depth of conviction, the same power to issue in actual life, here and now.

In distinction from this assumption of the fact of immortality is the hypothesis of Immanuel Kant. Kant, with his cold reason, could find no adequate proof of immortality. But he announced in his "Critique of Practical Reason" that immortality is "the practically necessary condition of a duration adequate

to the complete fulfilment of the moral law"; therefore he would live *as if* he were immortal. For one with rigid habits this hypothesis of Kant's might perhaps issue in a character free of blemishes. But you cannot imagine any character so inspired as having any enthusiasm or dash. You could be sure that Dr. Kant would take his afternoon walk at exactly the same hour every afternoon, with the watchful Lampe and the umbrella following after; you could be sure that he would make due and generous provision for those dependent upon him; but you would not expect Königsberg to be thrilled with the news that Dr. Kant had ever gone out of his way to do an unexpected deed of heroism or kindness. There are many excellent people, not at all in the rank of

Kant, having no tinge of philosophical analysis, who are holding what they believe their faith in immortality simply as an hypothesis. It has not gripped them. They amiably and earnestly try to live in such a way that if immortality should turn out to be true they would not be hopelessly discredited after the dark corner was turned. Immortality is only a serious speculation.

On the threshold of this discussion, therefore, it is important to make sure that the belief in immortality of which we are thinking is a thorough-going conviction, not an ethereal mist floating on the surface of our minds. Before a man can expect this belief to influence his life he must inquire sternly whether he sincerely is relying upon a future beyond death. Has he, for ex-

ample, the same degree of certainty which a man has who believes that he has had communication with persons whose bodies are dead? Has he, by any means whatever, reached a conclusion as definite as that which Myers attained? It is with the assumption that there are men in the world who have this utter persuasion that we may investigate the present results of a belief in the immortal life.

III

In the remainder of this lecture I shall describe four ways in which a belief in immortality affects the earthly life of an individual. The results are such results as can be studied in the lives of those whose faith in a continued existence has, for any reason, become sharp and

intense. They are such results, further, as might serve to test the faith which a man *thinks* he possesses.

First of all, a man expecting an indefinite length of life beyond death takes himself in hand to conquer the temptations which beset him, to eradicate his faults, to cultivate his virtues. The one word which best describes this attitude towards life is self-control.

If a man is tolerably sure in his own mind that death ends all, he is apt to let certain parts of his life slip away from his spiritual grasp. He may outwardly submit to all the conventions of decency, because such submission is the easiest and most comfortable means of meeting the days as they pass. Inwardly, however, he is prone to say to himself that, since this life is all, he

would wisely get out of it anything which ministers to his immediate pleasure. Such a man may appear to be a good citizen, but he is not a man with a keen moral sense, and he has inherently no ideals.

I am fully aware that there are exceptions to this rule. A man like Henry Sidgwick can announce that he has no thought whatever of living beyond the grave and yet maintain the most rigid control of all his higher instincts. This is partly because of intellectual training, partly because Sidgwick was a guide of youth to whom he felt deep responsibility. Able as he himself felt to stand up against the narrowness of his hope, he dreaded for humanity any collapse of a belief in immortality. He did not believe the

world could hold together without a conviction of continuing life. This heroic mastery, without hope, may also be achieved by a form of Stoicism, which will probably never fail strong but negative personalities. William Ernest Henley could sing, not cheerfully but courageously: —

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the Shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.

There are others who, through similar Stoicism, have been able to keep themselves in order without the great vision of the future, but they are rare

spirits, and, as these verses show, they do not find their task exhilarating.

One can but depend on one's own observation for drawing general conclusions, and I am obliged to say that from such study as I have been able to give to humanity, face to face, I am quite certain that a man who has no dependence on the future life, either consciously or subconsciously, is not likely to cultivate his own self-mastery. He drifts; he minimizes consequences because all consequences are soon over; he feels no eternal principles. There are exceptions. But the exceptions only serve to prove the rule.

Now, what difference does it make when a man becomes thoroughly aware that the barrier called death is not a wall but a door? He may still lose command

of himself, he may still let his character drift to the tangled undergrowth by the side of the stream; but he cannot do so complacently. A man who could endure the thought of making a mess of threescore and ten years would be aghast at the thought of having his life confusion for eternity. A man awake to the permanence of character knows that sooner or later he must catch up the threads that have been allowed to unwind. William James has taught us, in his vivid way, that just as it is harder to wind a ball of string than to let it unwind, so it is harder to get control of one's self than to let one's self go to the winds. The unwinding of a week may take years to wind again. William James has also taught us that the body does not forget. Everything we do leaves its

traces. He speaks of a stream starting its course on the side of a mountain. After a rain the water flows down along the course of least resistance, and digs for itself a tiny channel. At the next rain, when the waters flow, they follow this little track, only digging it deeper; and so, month by month, the stream is bound to go in the path habit has made for it, and only the most serious effort of man can divert it from this course. So our insignificant impulses start their way through our bodies, and wear first a faint path, and then, little by little, form a deep bed through which all subsequent impulses must, but for almost superhuman effort, find their way. If the right course is taken, fine habits are formed, and all is well; if the wrong course, evil habits gain control, and all

is failure. If death ends all, the poor victim can bear the prospect; but if death does not end all, he is overwhelmed with the effort which he sees that some time he must exert. Whatever he may imagine the medium through which life is to be continued, whether a body similar to our material body, or a body so far spiritualized that it may scarcely be called a body, he is convinced that the law which the psychologist clearly defines for this life must, if there is a life beyond this, be true also for that life.

Essentially all convictions about the future life agree in the belief that character is the same five minutes after death that it was five minutes before death. We reach the next stage of life exactly where we left it here. Death does not mean

a huge leap, up or down. The happy blessing is that a man is as good as he is; the dismaying curse is that he is as bad as he is. There may be surprises for the self-forgetful and the meek, and also for the self-satisfied and the proud; but facts and attainments are not spirited away or metamorphosed by any heavenly alchemy. "Inasmuch as ye did it," is the judgment of the Perfect One: He expects men to be what they are. Just there is their glory or their shame. The progress seems infinite in possibility, but life so far as we know it does not lead us to think that we may leap across any wide gulfs. Hence, if we look forward to the life beyond this, we cannot be indifferent to the contribution which our life here will surely make to the life there. If we die with

a bad temper unconquered, we shall have to possess the ugly thing there; or else begin by the same painful discipline as is required here to rid ourselves of it there. If we die with sour envy embedded in our character, with indirectness or cheating, there will they all be glaring at us to be endured or to be fought. It is this solemn assurance that everything here counts for a very long time, far beyond the span of an earthly career, which makes immortality, once believed in, enormously compelling. A man in his senses cannot be convinced of immortality without instantly determining to stiffen his course, to check the bad, to cherish the good, to be his best. He may stumble and fall, again and again, but he must grow towards the destiny which awaits him.

Among the incentives which impel us to take immortality seriously into our everyday life is the discovery that the so-called moral law is not an arbitrary device imposed upon us from a remote and unsympathetic government, but is the result of human experience interpreted by a divine clearness. The laws of God are often difficult, but they are for human happiness in its ultimate reaches. We discover that the prodigal sons, bewitched with the attractions of certain far countries, always long, when they come to themselves, to return home. Righteousness is in some way indissolubly connected with the satisfying element in life. Our habits cannot run riot, and make maturity or old age anything but a hideous nightmare. We sometimes hear people say that

they think immortality undesirable: so far from believing in it, they would not for the world believe in it if they could. Back of this cynical scorn lies an insight into the eternal values. To make anything of even this life, we must toil like galley-slaves. The effort to eradicate our meanness and our baseness is almost impossible; the permanent desire to do exactly the right and the true is still far off among the shadows. If death were all, we could be content to fail. But to think of a future prolonged in failure is unbearable. We must in some age, near or remote, begin to get on the right track. There is little reason to suppose, from what we already have learned of life, that a postponed beginning is ever easier because it is postponed. With the spaces shining before

us, we know that we are discreet if we put off the effort not a single day. If we win any battle here, that battle is won for ever; and we are ready for new victories. Other battles will seem similar, but they are never the same. If we do well in any stage of life, whether that stage be a year or the whole of this earthly existence, the next stage is inevitably easier. We cannot contemplate immortality without at least a vigorous impulse towards self-control.

Another incentive to take immortality seriously is associated with what we are accustomed to speak of as the larger hope. I shall have occasion to refer to this hope again: here I wish to apply it to our individual behaviour. By the larger hope we mean the confidence which many people have that at length,

whether in time or in eternity, every man shall be saved to the beauty and goodness of life. We are inclined to state the hope with a logical intimation: if, we say, God has made us and has put us in a world which is often sorrowful and dangerous, He will feel responsible for our mishaps and sins, and will so contrive the future that we shall all come out into his marvellous light. I am not now discussing whether there is any foundation for such a hope. The only point I wish to make is that if we accept the larger hope it brings responsibility down upon us individually. We cannot speak of God's responsibility for the souls which He has made until we try to imagine how it will be possible for any personality which has failed here to begin to start right in some future age. As

a filthy vagabond cannot be made happy by being thrust into a metropolitan art-gallery which delights the lover of pictures, or into a library which delights the scholar, or into a palace which makes the congenial environment of a king, so neither can a coarse and vulgar worldling be made happy by throwing him into a group of saints who talk perpetually of worship and love and service. It is something in the man himself which must be changed: it is not so much the material for happiness as the capacity to enjoy happiness which he must win. Accordingly, if a miscreant, having come to the end of an ill-spent life, is defiantly charging God to remember that, having created him, He owes to him as good a future as to the noblest, God may grant him his demand;

but the first truth which will be borne in upon the man's awaking intelligence will be that the demand is not so much upon God as upon him. He himself must change. If he has allowed his habits to harden on the wrong side, he must sooner or later take up the grim task of changing those bad habits into good habits. To put off the day of beginning to do this is only by so far to increase the difficulty. To say that God must bring us all out into the heavenly places of life is in a measure to limit our freedom. These people who have been defying law all their lives will be forced to submit patiently, as if they were children just beginning to walk, to the law of the privilege which they charge upon God as their right. If God grants it, they will find the disci-

pline goading them on to choose the paths which hitherto they have despised. And when their imagination has gone thus far, they will cry out that, since immortality of a saving sort is surely before them, they will begin now to make ready for it. They may fail; but, if they are sane, they will try to begin.

The first result of a vital faith in immortality is that the believer will, because of his belief, assume a tighter control of his daily life. Seeing that this earthly life is only a fragment of a very long life, he will determine to get on as far as may be before this first chapter closes.

IV

Another result of a firm belief in immortality is courage to meet the hard places in life, because, in spite of their cruel torture for the time being, they are seen to have a meaning for a life extended beyond the life which we now live. We gain this courage first from certain experiences within the limits of this life. For example, a youth may pass through a long illness which brings him close to death. He may be in pain for weeks. At the time the whole experience seems altogether grievous; but as the invalid passes into the hope and joy of convalescence, he begins to survey life as he never examined it before: he contemplates its dignity and its value. With gratitude to the Giver of life and health

he determines to do something serious and worthy with the years before him; and thus he enters upon a career which proves to be full of satisfying ideals and accomplishment. As he thinks what he might have been had no such tragedy fallen across his path, he blesses the evil day when he lay low with a dread sickness. That harsh experience has come to mean something for the glory of life, a glory it could not otherwise have had. Or, again, the father of a family may find his business crumbling about his head; and in the blackness of his despair he goes home to tell his rather worldly and selfish family that they will have to give up all the luxuries and conveniences of life. Whereupon, instead of meeting reproach, he finds a love and a sympathy which he

never suspected. These pampered children rise up to help him bear his burden. They all together enter the valley of poverty; but out of that poverty both he and his children gain a happiness and a worth which the days of prosperity never could have given. For months he may curse the bitterness of his fate; and only after many readjustments does he awake as from a dream to appreciate how fortunate he and his have been to have had a crushing misfortune. These are types of the experiences which can in an earthly period demonstrate that at least some of the hard places have a meaning beyond their vexing pain.

But there are other experiences which cannot be explained on earth. The little child, endowed with what seems bud-

ding genius and a generous opportunity, dies: his life is snuffed out in an evening twilight, and this world seems to those who knew and loved him unutterably poor for ever. This world can give no meaning to that experience. Again, of two people bound together by a beautiful love through the years, one passes through death into the unseen; and for the survivor is a loneliness worse than death. This world can only say that separation is inevitable; it has no solution for the bleak fact. Once more, there are invalids chained to beds of pain with the physician's verdict that they never can be well. They lack neither courage nor ambition: they are able to fire with purpose those who, in their strength, stand near them; but for their own individual lives

there is in this world no meaning in their woe: they wait only for release and forgetfulness. Finally, there are the miserably poor, who never have a chance in this world: among them are certain alert persons who rise out of poverty to seize upon some mammoth opportunity, and through the discipline which poverty has given them they are strong enough to lead the world in their department of activity. But these conspicuous fruits of poverty are exceptions. What are we to say of the poor who remain poor, whose grinding struggle leaves them lustreless and heavy, incapable of any but the gross enjoyments of life? They die, and those who behold, and who know, can only say frankly that they are glad for them that they are dead. This world, let us con-

fess, has no solution for the mystery of degrading poverty.

Now, how are all such experiences to be interpreted the moment we are convinced that no solution of anything is to be weighed till we have imagined what is to be the result in a life beyond death? If we find that disasters, temporarily disheartening, can in this life find an encouraging meaning, it is legitimate to assume that forlorn conditions, never explained here, can in the life to come receive a meaning which can justify their austerity. We catch glimpses of this outcome when we measure results through long ranges of history. When America was being colonized, the Spaniards fixed upon the luxuriant South, and in its ease and warmth their civilization perished. The English sent

colony after colony to the swamps of Virginia and to the rock-bound coasts of New England: hardship and death dogged them at every step, but out of this difficulty arose the civilization of the West. In the seventeenth century the world was not confident of the result of a civilization built upon toil and peril; it takes generations and centuries to demonstrate such a principle. Thus, going only a little farther, we venture to push the principle out beyond the bounds of time into eternity, assured that it will be found as true there as in the individual life, and as in the course of history. To be confident of immortality is also to be confident that every hard place in life means something, if we will bravely accept it. Therefore, to believe in immortality is to send us

back to our present experience with courage for any fate. To make this clear, I intend to speculate upon the meaning which may possibly be found in another life for the four experiences which I have mentioned as insoluble this side the grave, — the death of little children, the separation in death of lovers, life-long illness, and hopeless poverty. It will be only imagination, but the imagination will be based upon experience which has been realized.

What shall we say of the death of little children? They have missed the sunlight and the laughter of earth. How can those who love them be reconciled to their passing? We cannot tell, but it is possible that, entering the new life as children, they shall remain the gay and innocent children of eternity. Apart

from the spirited variety which they must contribute to the on-going life, there is the possible great reward for them individually that they may continue to be the care-free, blithe beings whom we knew here, only developed and perfected into the heavenly childhood. We may think of their loss here —for they have missed the joys of earth as well as its sorrows and pitfalls —as made up to them by a peculiar privilege not granted to maturity, and for ever preserved.

Then there is the separation by death of those whose lives have been bound together in the holy and intimate ties of love. What possible interpretation can immortality give to such desolation, and how can it cry out to the bereaved soul, *Courage!* Again we

have only imagination to guide us; but earthly conditions give us a valid suggestion. When a boy is sent to school, both he and his parents are overwhelmed with that most poignant suffering of separation, known as homesickness: there is no pain quite like it. Yet love dares to maintain the degree of separation which the boy's going away to school involves. The event proves that love was wise in its Spartan discipline; for the separation teaches the boy, as he could not otherwise learn, what his home and his parents are. Viewing them from a distance he seems first to know them. He comes back upon his holiday, if he is a right-minded boy, with a new appreciation and reverence of his father and his mother. He has a knowledge of them which uninterrupted

fellowship could not have given him. There we have the suggestion of the meaning of the separation of death for those who love one another. If death is the end, the best one can achieve is stoical resignation. If death is not all, and immortality is in store, then the Comforter of humanity may and does inspire with courage the baffled and desolate survivor, — somewhat as the loving father gives consoling strength to his homesick boy who writes his woe from the far-away school. We begin, when convinced of immortality, to believe that separation must mean something. It is not a mere physical necessity, but a spiritual benefit. May it be, we ask, that if we were not separated for a time from those we love, we should lose something of our full ap-

preciation of them? Would the future life be less complete because we had not known them as the boy at school learns, with an intenser knowledge, to love his father and his mother? There is such a defect as taking friendship and love too much for granted. It is good to lose it for a season that we may learn it to be the supreme miracle that it is. The separation of death may, one thinks, do this very thing: it may enhance the joy of mutual love when the day of re-possession comes. There is sound reason why a man who believes in immortality should have high courage in the presence even of blinding bereavement. "Now I recognize," writes just such a brave sufferer, "that the spirit cannot be crushed by circumstances. A flood of joyous and deep

realizations have come to me lately. It seems almost quite worth while to have lived through such agonies to understand human life and suffering as I can, and to have the power to help at times the people who turn to me. There is a kind of fulness of life in me now which is overwhelming: it is not exaltation, but a sort of clarity of vision and intensity of love which heightens life's beauty and meaning." Such moods cannot be more than intermittent in this life. They are the intimations of immortality. "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face."

We come, next, to the contemplation of a life crippled by painful illness and so debarred from any active service in the world. How shall we persuade the hopeless invalid to hope against hope?

I am not now thinking of partial invalids, like Robert Louis Stevenson, who, in spite of weak bodies, succeed in accomplishing the tasks of giants. I am thinking of the unknown people who are quite beyond work of any sort, the people whose only service can be to endure without groans and lamentations. A Christian minister sees in the course of twenty years an appalling amount of physical suffering. Day after day he sees people whom death only can release from racking and incessant pain: they are wholly incapacitated. As he sees the faces of such people, ordinarily not hard but tender and patient, he knows by his Christian belief in immortality what a vast strength of inner character is being stored up against that day of release. It is no

perfunctory word of cheer which he speaks. He is looking at such heroism as any soldier might be proud to equal on the battlefield. He knows beyond peradventure that such gallant bearing means a victory which is to become a permanent possession. Without immortality, such courage as this is mockery; with immortality, it is sublime: there is the most ardent reason for it. Not an atom of it is lost.

And there is the oppression of poverty. How shall one be courageous under its strain? Poverty is quite likely so far to subdue a man's spirit that he believes himself a failure. Everything to which he has turned his hand has failed to give him what, by any ordinary estimate, would be called a living. He has scarcely been able to keep soul

and body together. But there are men who are poor in just this way who have not lost their interest in life. How can they avoid scoffing and murmuring except by seeing another world before them! They know that their courage is not lost. If death were the end, it would be lost; but since they are convinced that death is not the end, they are sure that their brave conquest of untoward circumstances will count. Lazarus shall yet be in Abraham's bosom, not by a mere turning of the tables, but by the inherent right of a hard lot courageously endured. In this life the son of a manufacturer is often trained to succeed his father in leadership by being sent to work in the lowest and most disagreeable departments of the mill, there to learn the business

from the beginning. It may be that in the new life, having begun at the bottom in this, and not having shirked, the brave poor man will be fitted to go forward to successes, which the man, successful here, will never attain. Once more immortality permits us to believe that every experience has its possible meaning and can be made to count towards the future.

It must be granted that all these reasons for courage in the hard places of life must be expressed through imaginary outcomes. But immortality can so far inspire a rational hope that it believes these imaginary outcomes insufficiently described. When we are sure of immortality we are not afraid of any condition: we know that no sign of courage, active or passive, will fail of

its exact reward. Everything that happens to us, to the very gate of death, can by a brave man be turned to account for the glorious future which awaits his coming. Our best imaginings fall short. We may dream, so fire our courage, and then expect something better than our wildest dreams. This is not superficial optimism made in soft and luxurious homes; it is the fierce confidence bred in places where one would expect to find only weeping and groaning and cursing. It is not joy exactly, but it is akin to joy. It is the dauntlessness of Job, when he said, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in Him." It is the conviction that the future is so sure that no struggle against a present ill can be in vain.

V

A third result of a belief in immortality is detachment from the mere things of life. This detachment is not a forlorn asceticism, dwelling upon its self-denial, but is the happy ascent to a new sense of freedom. Certain qualities within man are conceived as permanent, — love and honour and sacrifice and righteousness, — but the houses and lands are remembered to be temporary. And yet many excellent people grow haggard with worry about the outward and the passing. They fret because their income is affected by a change in the market; they cannot smile because a certain building which they owned has been burned; they are in despair because a thief in the night has carried off

much of their family silver. All these outer circumstances seem to vex them vastly more than the impression that a son at college is wasting his time, that a daughter is vulgar in her conversation, that they themselves are growing hard. In his better moments a man may envy his coachman the radiant look in his eye; he may sigh and wish himself as free as this underling.

It is important to notice that it is the poor man quite as much as the rich man who may be in bondage to things. I remember years ago coming upon the smouldering ruins of an isolated cottage by the roadside. Over these ashes a woman was weeping and wringing her hands. She was obliged to work all day, and had left her tiny house that morning believing it safe. She now returned

to find everything that she possessed gone: not one thing had been saved. She told of the chair in which she had sat; of the old bits of cloth which had belonged to her mother; of the photographs. . . . Her family were all dead; she had made no friends; she had no interests beyond these few treasures, which each night she had been wont to fondle as if they had been children. The whole scene was heart-breaking. It was the story of Job in a modern form. But when one thought it over, it ought not to have been a tragedy. Symbolical as these possessions were, they were but symbols, things. The realities for which they stood still lay behind and above them, indestructible. The love, the loyalty, the comfort, once enshrined in them had not perished

with them. Only the woman did not know. Things were all in all to her. In exactly the same way the monk who has devoted his life to poverty may be dreaming of the possessions he might have had, and may be congratulating himself because he has been amazingly good to give them up. From time to time he longs for them. So, too, the poor labouring man, living in two rooms, may have for his ideal the possession of a palace on some avenue with all the trappings which belong to it. In contrast with all this, we may think of certain rich men who have been surrounded all their lives with abundance of possessions, and who are so far indifferent to them that if their possessions were all to vanish in one night, their owners could on the next day be-

gin again with entire courage to earn a living. I have known such people. The only explanation of their attitude is that, for one reason or another, they have become detached from things. A sense of immortality has been borne in upon them. They are able to distinguish between things and realities. Perhaps many of those dearest to them have gone beyond the range of death. Perhaps they are absorbed in some controlling enthusiasm. Perhaps they have become sated with things and are weary of them. Whatever the reason, there are men, rich and poor, who are honestly indifferent to things. They use them when they are theirs. But they do not magnify them. To have them or to lose them is not of much consequence. They have laid up for themselves treasure in

life where moth and rust do not corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. Where their treasure is, there are their hearts also.

It is a conviction of immortality, held either consciously or subconsciously, which alone can really give detachment from things. If one lives on a mighty thoroughfare, where thousands of all sorts of human beings pass each day, one may easily have the maudlin sentimentality of Xerxes on the Hellespont, watching his million soldiers march by, and weeping because in a brief time all this host must be dead. As one goes out into the throngs and watches the faces, reading there the infinite ranges of fear and hope, of joy and sorrow, of failure and achievement, one is swept upon the shores of eternity. It is not

the passing of earthly bodies which concerns one, but the permanent forces in life. Then in the surging stream of life, lost in its onward rush, one looks up at the tall buildings and sees them as in a dream. They are not real. It is the life which devises them, which passes in and out, which sees them crumble and fall to dust, — it is human life which is real, — the life which is unseen, spiritual, albeit enshrined for a few years in bodies which we see. After such an experience as this one returns to one's familiar possessions with a feeling almost of resentment that they are there to clog one's journey. Life is so much more than things, it stretches out so wide and far, that one is able quite to forget things. The sense of immortality blots them out of thought and interest.

They are to be used as the earth is used under the marching of soldiers going into battle. The earth is there, it helps; but the inspiration for the battle is the imperishable cause for which men are content to die. So men, because aglow with immortality, win their detachment from things.

VI

A youth of intelligence cannot reach the consciousness of awaking powers within him without simultaneously becoming aware that if he is to fulfil his destiny he must use those powers for some honest and hard work. If, through the years, you watch such a person, you can at least surmise — perhaps you can know — whether or not he is depending in any sense upon an expectation

of immortality. If the work appears to be such as could reasonably be rounded and completed within an ordinary earthly life, you must think that, neither consciously nor subconsciously, does he rely upon any hope of having more than one lifetime for his task. If, however, you see that his chosen work is too ambitious to be closed in even a hundred years, if, further, as you look into his clear eyes you know that he is neither self-deceived nor mad, you then know that, however silently and modestly, he is expecting ample time to work out his dreams, — a time so ample, indeed, that he intends to go on working after the latch of death has snapped the door of this life behind him. He shows by the greatness of his task his belief in immortality. "For

half a century," wrote Victor Hugo, "I have been writing my thoughts in prose and in verse; history, philosophy, drama, romance, tradition, satire, ode, and song; I have tried all. But I feel that I have not said the thousandth part of what is in me. When I go down to the grave I can say, like many others, 'I have finished my day's work.' But I cannot say, 'I have finished my life.'"

And so it is for every man. If any person is thoroughly aroused by a conviction of immortality, the work he sets himself to do will show it. It has often been said that the world is done with the man whose work is done. On the other hand, if we see a man whose work will take eternity to finish, we ask tremblingly whether eternity may not be given him. For that man there is rea-

son, at any rate, why there should be eternity. He is justifying his belief in it.

There are a good many young people with a touch of genius who are so delicate in health that it is exceedingly problematical whether they can live more than a few years. Again and again you find these brilliant people facing death as a probability and yet going on gallantly with a vigorous preparation for a significant life-work. It is folly to think that they can do anything adequate with such a long preparation unless they are to have twenty or thirty years in which to build upon their foundation, — and then they can but make a beginning. You may say that these young persons are gambling with fate: they are getting ready to live this life only in case they are allowed to live; while

there is life there is hope, and youth is divinely hopeful. The physical weakness may pass: they may after all live long on the earth. Perhaps they may. But one cannot help thinking that, without forgetting such a chance, they are counting upon something which is to them more certain. Though weak now they are conscious that, whatever befalls them, there is strength for them in the future. They go about their task of laying solid foundations, knowing by a superb instinct that their preparation shall count for a great task whether they live or whether they die. They, too, by the greatness of the work which they have chosen, demonstrate what it is truly to believe in immortality.

Another phase of the same truth appears in a worker who persists in cling-

ing to an ideal, the practical fruits of which the present world treats with disregard or contempt. An artist, for example, may continue to paint pictures in such a style that no one will buy them. This artist may have unquestioned genius. He could readily paint exactly the sort of pictures which would satisfy the current taste, and so instantly find a market for his work. But he sees that it is his divinely appointed task to go on developing his art in the way he believes to be the highest till he has painted the best picture of that kind which can be painted. Meantime, will the world of his day ever recognize the beauty and the truth which he sees in his work? Even after his death, should the pictures survive, would any age give its approval? And there is still another

question: Is it possible that through a long earthly life he might never be able to paint such a picture as any generation of men ought to value? Remember the well-assured fact that he could at any moment drop his ideal and paint the sort of pictures which the rich of to-day would rush forward to buy; and then contemplate the conviction which prefers poverty and inattention rather than to surrender a belief in the significance of his work as he is trying to do it. That persistent faith in the value of his work means a sublime reliance on immortality. The flash of this artist's eye proclaims to the observer that the toiler cannot toil in vain. He sees the ultimate victory in the clouds of heaven. He seems to know immortality.

Of modern biographies there is not a

more inspiring life than that of Louis Pasteur. His biographer says plainly that Pasteur was constantly mindful of immortality. "Absorbed as he was," is the record, "in his daily task, he yet carried in himself a constant aspiration towards the Ideal, a deep conviction of the reality of the Infinite and a trustful acquiescence in the mystery of the universe." Again the biographer writes, "Absolute faith in God and in eternity, and a conviction that the power for good given to us in this world will be continued beyond it, were feelings which pervaded his whole life." And at the end the biographer relates that it seemed as if "Pasteur already saw those dead ones who, like him, had preserved absolute faith in the Future Life."

But we need no assurances either

from the biographer or from Pasteur's own letters to tell us that Pasteur believed eagerly in immortality. The reader is convinced by the method in which Pasteur chose and performed his work. Having discovered his transcendent gift of saving life through science, he gave himself up to his vision with utter recklessness. When he was trying to arrest cholera in Paris in 1865, risking his life in his experiments, Henri Deville said to him one day, "Studies of that sort require much courage"; whereupon Pasteur answered simply, "What about duty?" When he was treating poor little Joseph Meister, apparently dying of hydrophobia, he lost sight of the accumulation of experiments on animals which guaranteed his success, and spent the last terrible night

before the cure was certain in sleeplessness, being haunted through the slow dark hours by distorted visions of a dying child. His first discoveries were of enormous commercial value, and he could easily have been diverted from his desire to relieve human suffering by confining himself to studies of fermentation, silk-worms, and the like, in order to become immensely rich; but he was sure that "a man of pure science would complicate his life, the order of his thoughts, and risk paralyzing his inventive faculties, if he were to make money by his discoveries." In mid-life he did have a break-down which seemed to indicate that his career was to be cut short. But he worked on steadily, without excitement, as if death, if it came, could not interrupt him. And

at the end of his full career, when, after crowding honours from a grateful world, he knew that he must pass from this life, he did not fold his hands and ask for peace, but each day asked to be pushed in his wheel-chair into the garden of his *Institut* that he might share, with his last intelligence and his last strength, in its work. As one lays down the book one is forced to say that the life of Pasteur was not finished in his seventy-three years of earth. It is, one says to one's self, that man's vocation to work at his great task for ever; consequently one thinks, "Life for evermore is his." He not only believed in immortality: he lived it.

It is inevitable that to many a modest man or woman this assumption of a great task, to prove one's faith in im-

mortality, should seem beyond the most earnest grasp. The duties of the common day seem to absorb every second of time; and to go wildly in search of some ambitious scheme would mean only to abandon the evident duty beneath one's hand,—and that would be wrong. The reply to such a cavil as this is to point out that great tasks are not necessarily conspicuous. The greatest task is often the insignificant duty done in a great way, which thereby transforms littleness into magnificence.

There is no more common task than a mother's in the upbringing of her children. That task may be so trifling that it will seem to proclaim that she is content to let death draw the curtain for ever. Thus she may be drilling her children in the mere amenities and clever-

nesses of life. It may be her daily concern how they may achieve comradeship with this group or that in social splendour; how they may shine in public or private speech; how, by some startling deed of strength or skill, they may lay hold of the public admiration; or even how they may, by marriage or by industry, be comfortably provided with abundance of goods. It seems as if these ambitions showed the short vision of a good many mothers. Their work for their homes has not one syllable to say of immortality: it speaks loudly, but all its sounds are of this life, and this life only.

Now there is a different sort of mother. Outwardly her home is quite the same as the homes of these other mothers whom I have been describing. She is as rich or as poor as they; as prominent or

as unknown; as charming or as dull; as learned or as ignorant. All such details as these are purely irrelevant. When you see this mother with her children you recognize at once a subtle difference which transfigures her task and makes it shine as the stars in heaven. She is not indifferent to the pretty baubles which adorn life; she is pleased if they come to her children; but only on one condition; and that is, that they do not curb in them a desire for that which is best and highest, which no failure can quench, and which no success can burn to cinders. She is lifting her eyes to see a distant scene which is beyond the gates of time. She dares to pray for her children's poverty if poverty means honour absolutely white and clean. She dares to pray for her chil-

dren's disgrace in the world, if persecution means that they have obeyed a heavenly vision. She dares to pray for her children's death, if by dying they may save an heroic day for country or for truth. This mother lives sometimes in a cottage, sometimes in a palace; sometimes in a Christian city, sometimes in a heathen village; but wherever she lives, she makes earth eloquent with immortality. She makes her commonplace task very noble. Hers is a work which cannot end with time. She needs eternity to complete it; and eternity she shall have.

You have doubtless read of the aged saint who would not allow his portrait to be painted. "For which man," he asked, "do you wish to paint? One of them is not worth painting, and the

other is not finished yet." That story tells of a man whose work is to reach out into the infinite. His life is singing of immortality, not because he is soft and fearful, not because he has been crushed and awed by conditions here, not because he longs to escape as from a prison into the expected peace of heaven, but because he is strong and courageous, because he believes incurably in life and the extent of its opportunity. He has put his hand to a task so vast that, while it can be begun here, it can only be begun. With joy shall he work upon it while the light of this life shines over it; and when the night of death draws down, he shall still rejoice, for the morning comes, the work shall go on. And in God's bright noontide he shall finish it.

RESPONSIBILITY OF INDIVIDUAL

Immortality throws upon the individual at least four commanding responsibilities: the responsibility to be master of himself in all temptations; the responsibility to be courageous in all the hard places of experience; the responsibility to detach himself from the mere things of life; and the responsibility to buckle to himself a task so great that only eternity is long enough to complete it. If he fulfils these responsibilities he has already passed from death into the endless life. He already stands firmly in the high and beautiful country of immortality.

II

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE WORLD TO IMMORTALITY

I

In spite of efforts, here and there, to escape the tendency, the world has for a good many centuries been chiefly concerned with the individual. Competition rather than coöperation has been the distinctive note among the sounds of men. Naturally enough, therefore, immortality has seemed the reward of the individual: and individual immortality is the only kind of immortality of which the average man has any conception. It is a wholesome corrective to recall to ourselves that there

have been periods in the world's history when the only conception of ongoing life was through the family and the nation.

So far as scholars can discover from the ancient Scriptures the Hebrew people reached their hope of individual immortality through their longings to perpetuate their families, their tribes, their nation. The growth of the Messianic idea was an inspiring vision of the way in which the nation might not only continue, but continue in righteousness, as the people chosen by God to be directly under his eternal rule. We should not desire for a moment to return to the gloomy thought of Sheol, as the dim abode of individual souls after death, — a thought which characterized a good deal of Old Testament theology;

but we may with profit return to that other, larger, and positive conception of the Old Testament, the belief that groups of humanity as groups would be perpetuated. Incidentally one may add that in returning to it we are bound to relate it in some way to the hope of individual immortality, and, for this and other reasons, find for it a much larger content. But we must recognize at once the irresistible truth enshrined in the idea. "The faithful in Palestine," writes a high authority, Dr. R. H. Charles, "looked forward to a blessed future only as members of the holy people, as citizens of the righteous kingdom that should embrace their brethren. And herein . . . we can trace the finger of God; for it was no accident that his servants were unable to anticipate any

future blessedness save such as they shared with their brethren and nation. The self-centredness, if not selfishness, that marked the Greek doctrine of immortality is conspicuous by its absence in the religious forecasts of the faithful in Judaism. In true religion unlimited individualism is an impossibility. The individual can only attain to his highest in the life of the community here and hereafter."

Think for a moment of some of the groupings of humanity to which we may ascribe more than an earthly significance. The relationships of the family, sacred on earth, must have a meaning beyond time. The spirit of a university putting its mark upon generation after generation, binding to itself affection and loyalty, means, one

suspects, a durable influence in life beyond the grave. At this moment we have grown suspicious of the right of the nation to survive, because we are seeing the privileges of patriotism travestied by a false ambition; but in normal times we feel that the idea of nationality stands for something eternal. Then there is the Church idea, uniting as it does men of many nations and many ages under one divine leadership, discovering to men that each is to love his brother till all men are bound together in the universal society of lovingkindness. Beyond the ideal of the Church it is only a step to the relationship which men bear one to another simply because they are alive. It is the ideal of the Church that it should embrace the world; till it does,

we must think of one more relationship which cannot die. There is a conception of a world-self which appears again and again in the history of thought, and by its insistence on reappearing leads us to ascribe to it an eternal value. I purpose now to speak of these relationships, one by one, in a little more detail.

In reflecting upon the immortality of the family tie, we must guard against stopping where the religious man in primitive ages stopped. You do not declare the family immortal when you think of your descendants always going on with the peopling of the world as we now know it. Nevertheless, we may find in what we sometimes call the immortality of influence an important con-

tribution to the assurance that a family is worth surviving. Thus it means much if a father can say to a son: "So far as I know, our family name has never been stained with dishonour. Do you see to it that you be not the first to stain it with any meanness or untruth." That is an entirely different thing from the attempt to pass on visible wealth or an accumulation of power. It is a spiritual quality to which the family is beckoned, and therefore this quality may be expected to survive, — provided it fall not into the pit of smug priggishness or self-deceived Pharisaism. We must pay honest tribute to the immortality of influence wherever we find it; and not least in families which, from father to son, through centuries, have been self-sacrificing and unselfish servants to the

state or some other group of humanity.

But I have in mind more than this. Though we are told on highest authority that "in heaven they neither marry, nor are given in marriage," yet the essential truth embracing the mutual love within a family seems to have in it a power which cannot die: there needs no creation of new families to maintain this. The Spartan mother who could fire her son's courage, the devotion of Penelope for her husband, the loyalty of Æneas to his father, the pain and triumph of the steadfast Antigone, all show the attitude of the Classical world. The modern world has presented even stronger ideals of family relationships: we can never forget the reverence of St. Augustine for his mother, the spiritual marriage of Dante to Beatrice

which produced one of the eternal visions of the world, the love of Sir Thomas More for his daughter, the tenderness of Charles Lamb for his insane sister. Beyond these are the types that are almost too common to be chronicled: the Anglo-Saxon type of love between husband and wife symbolized in Burns's "John Anderson my Jo," and the New England type of the last century and earlier by which one son in a family was chosen to have a college education and a "career," while the other children, with the father and the mother, stayed on the dreary farm, to toil, to sacrifice, and to pray, that the fortunate son and brother might go forth to his opportunity. Daniel Webster came from this sort of home, and the honour he gained is due in largest

degree to his obscure and unselfish father.

In the midst of all this history stands the figure of the historic Christ, pushing aside His unique career until His thirtieth year that (if we may trust tradition) He might make a home in Nazareth for His widowed mother,—a carpenter men called Him, but He was first of all a Son. And in the Middle Ages when the monastery robbed family life of its full glory, worship was accorded to the mother of Christ, so giving to every mother a consciousness of the dignity of her own divine honour in the relations of humanity.

I touch lightly upon these expressions of family love: each one of you from his own experience could expand the list indefinitely; but I trust that I

have said enough to make you feel that there is something in the family relationship which cannot be lost when the life we now know is merged into the life immortal.

Consider now the grouping of men centring in enthusiasm for a university. In contrast with a place where a conventional youth may spend several conventional years of amusement mingled with the minimum of study, and in contrast with the place for acquiring a certain technical knowledge required for a chosen work in life, is the university idea realized; that is, a place where young men absorb the ideals which have accumulated through distinguished teachers and through such pupils as prove to be geniuses, catching

the torch from the past, only to fan its fire to brighter light and to pass it on to him who will and can bear it. The University of Prague first did its huge share in making John Huss, and then Huss became the shining light of his university, and through the university stood for freedom in the world of his time. No one can think of Abelard, without thinking of the University of Paris, of which his teaching was the foundation; just as no one can think of Colet and Erasmus and Matthew Arnold, without instantly associating them with Oxford; or of Westcott or Tennyson without recalling Cambridge. In our own land Jonathan Edwards is part of Yale, and Yale is part of Edwards; and Agassiz and Emerson and Phillips Brooks are inseparable from Harvard.

All these men caught something from the association with the men and traditions of their universities, either as pupils or as teachers, or as both pupils and teachers, which partakes of an immortal quality. They cannot quite be imagined beyond time, without some of the relationships for which their respective universities are responsible. Is it not possible that there is at least an element in the idea of a university which is permanent, attaching to humanity however and wherever it may persist?

We need to guard against a too stubborn and unyielding definition of university. While it is easy to see the group, inspired and inspiring, in a formal institution of learning, yet it is undoubted that some men discover the group which makes their real university out-

side all college walls and paths. The little court at Weimar in the days of Goethe and Schiller, the Lake School of Poetry in England, and the Transcendentalist Movement in New England were all, in their way, exceptionally able universities. I remember that several years ago an English clergyman told me that he had in his parish a day labourer who spent his evenings in the study of botany. This man had acquired so profound a knowledge of botany that he was the welcome correspondent of some of the most celebrated botanists of Europe: his letters were his university, —it was not mere information which these letters brought to him, but joy in their friendship, and incentive to attain what might bring joy in turn to his unseen friends.

When we think of the nation, we must take into account the emotions, almost religions, which the nation has aroused in the lives of patriots. It is sometimes said that the reason why men may be expected to die for their country, in case of their country's extremity, is that a man is immortal, and a nation is not. But a man would also die for his friend, if his love were complete: there both factors in the sacrifice are immortal. Accordingly, we may think it an added reason why a man should die for his country, not that by his death he should maintain his country's name on the face of the map a year or two longer, but that by the abandonment characterizing his loyalty he should raise, if by ever so little, the standard of his country's glory, both for an exist-

ence here and for an immortality in the vast regions unseen.

When a great English statesman was mourning the death of Abraham Lincoln, he brought himself out of despair for a cause which he held to be sacred, by saying, "It is easy to kill a President, it is not easy to destroy a nation." If this could be said of a nation less than a century old, what might one say of the civilization of Greece, of Rome, of France, or of England? Nations have been born, have slowly developed, have reached a zenith, and then have gradually or suddenly seemed to give place to other powers: in the course of this history, however, they have attached to themselves the devotion of millions upon millions of immortal souls. If you think of immortality at all, it seems to

me rational that an idea like that of a nation should survive with those individuals who find it the source of enkindling life. As we dream of the hereafter may we not expect to find in its boundless and varied expression the perfection of what on earth we have known as the national spirit, only that the imperfect Rome, both as Republic and as Empire, should be rounded out into the perfection of which its earthly type was the promise, and so with all the great nations before and since? In so far as we find patriotism a spiritual quality, just in so far must we ascribe to it a lasting power. We are in danger, through timidity of imagination, of stripping our immortality so bare that it might seem to lack the vigour and interest which have made life worthy this

side of death. Among the relationships which have meant most to men's higher achievement is the relationship existing in the nation, and that relationship, in some form, higher than we can possibly anticipate, must survive the shock of earthly history.

We climb to a potentially higher relationship when we think of the individual's merging his indentity in the life of the Christian Church. By the Christian Church I do not mean any one Communion or limited group of Communions: I mean, difficult as it is to define and circumscribe, the Church Universal, a body of men, seen and unseen, who, in spite of defects of organization, in spite of distortions of truth by addition or subtraction, have on the whole been faith-

ful to one another and to the best that has been revealed to them, so that Christ could really be thought to be their head. There are lamentable chapters in the history of the Church, fraught with bitterness and strife, with worldliness and self-seeking, with bigotry and persecution, with hypocrisy and hate, with corruption and worse than death. But there are other chapters correspondingly rejoicing: they tell of the heroism of the early martyrs, of the clear-sighted courage of reformers, of the simple goodness of such officers as Victor Hugo depicted in the Bishop of *Les Misérables* or as Ian Maclaren described in the Pastor of Drumtochty, of the conquest of temptation in cottage and palace, of the man who is inwardly converted from a life of hardness and sin

to a life of tenderness and love. As base politicians may disgrace the name of patriotism, so base intriguers may disgrace the name of churchmanship. But, all other things being equal, a man who is loyal to the ideals of the Church, who is faithful to its Head and to his fellow-members, who keeps the laws of the Church and lifts his eyes to its Gospel, is a happier and better man than the man who, like Gallio, cares for none of these things.

We sometimes hear that the Church is only for this dispensation: it is for the through-a-glass-darkly stage of life; when this age is over we shall have something better. There we may catch up the words: yes, something better; that is, the Church made perfect; the Church will be changed, but we shall

be able to identify it. Of old, it was customary to speak of the Church Militant, being the Church on Earth; the Church Expectant, being the Church in Paradise; and the Church Triumphant, being the Church of the last stage, when all is made perfect in Heaven. Orders and ceremonies may easily pass away; but the purity of heart, the loyalty unto death, the love of utter self-forgetfulness, all of which the Church tries with its life-blood to cultivate, cannot pass. Other forms of expression the Church may readily accept, provided the realities which live within any outward covering go onward with strength.

The main reason why we must think of the immortality of the Church is that we cannot think it enough to approach God only one by one; we must by some

device come to do him homage as humanity, as members one of another. Each one of us ought to be so full of gratitude and praise that he should desire to have his imperfections neutralized and transcended by the virtues of others; and, if by any merciful providence, through good parents and devout teachers, any one of us has been able to escape grievous falls into sin, that strength, so won and maintained, ought to be shared with those less fortunate. It is good that the single voice utters its praise from the lonely places of life; but there is the wonder of the many voices, blending with the strings of many instruments, and so making what seems the perfection of praise, the expression of humanity and not of an individual, all variety tending to the amaz-

ing harmony. The longing to be lost in such a company cannot be confined to a few years of earthly life: the Church in Heaven — the Church Triumphant — must long to utter that praise of the heart which is now silent, but which must then be vocal, the very summit of all harmony, when the individual does his share but is lost in the rejoicing of the whole.

Then there is the other side of the shield. Here we must say our general confessions, confessing the sins which we as individuals never did, but the burden of which we must share, because we are members one of another, and we have the Spirit of our Master, who, perfect, bore the sins of the grossly imperfect. We have enough of His love to dare to be shorn of our strength if it

may make those weaker than ourselves more nearly strong. When the light of the heavenly country shall break upon us we dare to believe that sin shall have been transcended; but moral progress is still possible when sin is absent. The orthodox theologian has always taught that the sinless Christ grew in favour with God as well as with man. The saint-hood cannot be thought of as one of monotonous evenness: some must have attained excellence in one virtue, others in another. The range from innocence to Christlike perfection is an infinite distance, and the saints must be ever climbing towards the ideals which shall ever tower above them in the light of a divine presence. So the characteristic of the Church which impels men here to bear the burdens of the weak, will

surely impel those who have been able to climb high to reach down hands of help to those who struggle below them. Thus the praise and the service of the Church can be thought to go on through the unceasing years of eternity.

For all these reasons we cannot imagine immortality for the individual without imagining an immortality for the relationships cherished within the Church. It is quite likely that the most wordy and self-possessed of Churchmen here will reach the new life to find nothing there which they will think ought to be called the Church: it will not, to their mind, be rigid enough, or narrow enough, or indefinite enough, or soft enough. And so they will think that the Church has vanished in the mists of earth. But surely they

will discover that the ideals for which the Church at its best has always struggled will be held aloft by a body of faithful men which cannot be numbered ; and slowly they will see on the clouds of heaven the light of the true Church, generous enough to claim all who try to be true and good, convincing enough to make all see the truth and to walk joyfully in its straight and beautiful road. And that is the Church which must last for ever.

All these relationships of which I have spoken as knitting individuals together in the family, the university, the nation, and the Church, are suggestive of others, notably friendship. Friendship may scarcely be named alone, because its basis of love and comradeship

is the texture which makes vital the relationships upon which I have dwelt. I have said enough, I trust, to demonstrate that we must think of relationships existing among individuals themselves and then between individuals and that immeasurable wholeness, which is the whole human family and includes all the souls whom the Lord God has made or shall make. This wholeness may be symbolized in the language of to-day under the title of the federation of all nations or the organic unity of the Church. This is to conceive that even in this world men might appreciate the ultimate desirability of discovering a way by which humanity might not compete or fight, but remember only that it exists for each of its individual members equally with all

the rest, and for the God from whom it comes and to whom it goes.

If we have the conviction that these relationships are immortal, we must ask how we can show our sense of responsibility towards their immortality. How shall we live towards them in this life that we shall demonstrate our faith in their noble continuance? In answering this question, I shall not again take up the various relationships one by one, but I shall attempt to describe certain principles which may apply to all of them, illustrating the principles now from one and now from another of the relationships. In general, we may ask how we shall live towards the relationships here existing between the individual and the world-self, that

we may reach the next stage in life able to recognize the immortal life, in its corporate expression, which we with our fellows have been storing up in these days of preparation and opportunity.

II

The first word I put down is *Discrimination;* which means sense of proportion, with the attending sacrifice of all that is less worthy for the sake of that which is best. The application of this principle for individuals is generally recognized. It is not recognized always for the corporate life of groups of individuals. A man who would not fail to be a gentleman, a man of integrity and honour, as an individual, will sometimes be a boor, a scoundrel, and

a liar when he acts, as he supposes, in the interest of his country. Could he possibly be so transformed, if he believed that his country had an immortal value which lasted beyond the sights and sounds of this world? I think not, — at least if he could and did reflect.

Sooner or later the reader of history and biography sees that an individual is only humanity in the small, and humanity is only the individual in the large. As an individual grows, reaches his power, and declines, so a nation or a church goes through the processes of growth and decay, — and for exactly the same causes. Therefore it is as dangerous for a nation to gain the whole world and to lose its own soul as it is for an individual to do so. "If thine eye offend thee, pluck

it out, and cast it from thee," is a commandment to groups of men as well as to men one by one: and the solemn alternative is as fatal for one as for the other.

The world learns to apply this principle to smaller groups before it grasps the fact that it must apply it to all groups to the utmost limit of comprehension. For instance, when two universities are engaged in some significant athletic contest, it is often difficult to make the eager rivals understand that it is more important to play the game absolutely fairly than it is to gain the victory. All that is best in each university insists upon this code of honour, dismayed as it may be at the thought of defeat. An institution which has that sense of proportion among all its mem-

bers, however young, will not pass like a mushroom growth, but will last.

Now, it is quite possible that a man who, in his private affairs and in such smaller groupings as that of the university, had been entirely honourable, might think himself justified in taking the responsibility of doing a dastardly act or speaking a contemptible lie to save, as he would say, his country. Think of two nations at war. One, let us imagine, for what it declares self-preservation, ignores treaties solemnly sworn, throws international law to the winds, and in general conducts its warfare not as gentlemen might do, but as highway ruffians. The justification of such conduct is that war made so devilish that its frightfulness is soon over, is on the whole the most merciful; but the real

reason is a desperate haste to win at any cost. The other nation, let us imagine, starts its warfare with the firm resolve to regard treaties and international laws; the provocation of the enemy to retaliate with forbidden methods may be seriously tempting; but by the insistence of staunch rulers, though there be temporary loss and even risk of ultimate defeat, the nation maintains its honour. While it fights hard, it fights squarely. Like a noble individual, it says to itself and to the world, "Rather than do certain things, I prefer to die."

There we have the contrast. What is the result? Again and again in history it has been proved, as of the individual, so of the nation, that he that saveth his life shall lose it; and contrariwise, that he that loseth his life for Righteousness'

sake shall find it. To trample on sacred rights in order to maintain or enlarge a physical existence may win a battle or even a war, but the very success of the villainy strangles the nation itself. A nation raised to material magnificence may in the adventure so outrage human ideals that it will disgust the best of its own sons, who will steadily discover that they cannot defend a nation which has filth in its skirts. After enormous conquest a nation may suddenly drop apart. It may have lived to the flesh and have died to the spirit: what was earthly and temporal may have been so magnified that the immortal part shrivelled. Bourbon France died, not because the mob was violent, but because the really noble and strong could not defend a pleasure-seeking, selfish, rotted

civilization. France had too long been in the throes of the fatal illness of having had the supposedly-glorious reign of Louis XIV.

If there is any nation in the wars of to-day which is saying that anything is right for self-preservation, and is acting accordingly, it is searing with devilish tools its own immortal existence. Any nation which remembers that it has an immortal life to guard and to pass on will live, not for a passing victory, but for the eternal years, wherein only what is brave and true can survive. In the immortal life the most ignominious defeats may prove to be the most permanent victories, because the sense of proportion was kept, and the utmost sacrifice, even of what seemed life itself, was not shirked.

Other aspects of this law of discrimination appear in a nation like our own, which boldly announces that it offers a home for the oppressed of other lands, and endeavours to give every man who enters the life of the nation an equal opportunity. Setting aside the ambition of certain leaders, who import cheap labour in order to develop rapidly our natural resources, we may believe that America is sincere in its wish to offer, not only an asylum, but a real chance of larger life. But the danger is startling. A biologist has recently pointed out that "whatever the present antipathies may be to racial mixtures, we may rest assured that in a few hundred years these persons of foreign race and blood will be incorporated in our race and we in theirs." We know also from biology

that while such fusion may raise the lower race, it is likely to pull down the higher race. We are therefore facing, with our eyes open, the problem of immigration to this country. If we were a nation living for a few hundred years we might hesitate. But when we remember that we are a nation partaking of immortality, we know that we must discriminate, hold the ideal with its attending risk before us, and make the necessary sacrifice for the accomplishing of our distinctive, God-giving destiny.

And this consideration leads to another. We know well enough that the wealth of a nation, as Ruskin taught us, is the well-being of all its people. We are aware therefore that for our children's sakes, as well as for the sake

of the poor themselves, we must see that conditions improve among the less fortunate. A bad drain in a poor quarter of the city may bring a pestilence which shall reach into the wide avenues of the prosperous. But if we are really discriminating, we know that no selfish philosophy will give us the motive to help the submerged part of the community as we ought. If our nation is conceived to be really immortal, we shall be concerned, not only for the outward surroundings of those less comfortable than ourselves; we shall see also that their spirits are nourished. We shall think about the highest elements in their well-being, as well as of our own. We shall look into their places of amusement to assure ourselves that while they are thoroughly

interesting, they shall at the same time be clean, wholesome, elevating. We shall see that the beauty of a genuine art shall adorn their churches. By a companionship growing to friendship we shall, without patronage, give of our inner strength to receive in return their inner strength, gained by fortitude and by love in hard conditions. Because they and we make up a nation which is immortal, we shall not stop with the material benefits which it is right that we share, but we shall discriminate, we shall fix our attention primarily upon the deep things in the life of all individuals which in turn make the essential and continuing life of the nation.

When the Cathedral at Rheims was being bombarded, in the fall of 1914, a cry of indignation arose from the world,

because this ancient church was likely to be wholly destroyed. Apparently not even the death of tens of thousands of French soldiers had so scandalized the French nation and its friends. Some people said that God was dishonoured, because it was the place of His worship; but other churches had been destroyed, and long ago Christians had been taught that God's worship is not confined to sacred places, like Gerizim or Sion, but that men may anywhere worship God in spirit and in truth. And, besides, many joined in the outcry who were not interested in religion. It was for some people doubtless an artistic instinct which was offended. There might be another church as beautiful in its way; or this ruin might be restored; but the exact structure, with its associa-

tions of French history, with its time-coloured stones, with its suggestion of reverence for the past, could not be replaced. There was here the instinctive recognition that there was something immortal in the reverent work of the architects and builders who gave their lives to make Rheims Cathedral what it had become. It was the outward and visible expression of the unseen life of France: first there had been the plan in the mind of the architect, then the assembling of the stones, then the carving day by day of pillar and wall and buttress, of arch and tracery and roof. There kings had been crowned. There men had wept and rejoiced. There men had felt the presence of the Most High. What the church stood for was immortal: it stood for the

spirit of France. And as men weep over the body of a dead friend, so patriots wept over the symbol that for centuries had been, as it were, the body of France. But their very weeping showed that they believed in an undying spirit of the French nation. The cathedral could have been saved by an abject surrender to the invaders, but that would have been sacrificing the immortal part of France to its temporal expression. Rather, through their tears, they preferred to see the French world crumble and fall to dust, that the soul of France might be saved.

If any institution, grouping humanity, is conscious of its immortal dignity, it will show the fact by its discrimination, its sense of proportion, its willing sacrifice of the little for the great.

III

The second word I enter as a sign of our corporate immortality is *Truth*. We may think of truth as accuracy or as light. In the former case it is mathematical, in a fashion negative; it is anxious, lest it commit errors. In the latter case it is spiritual, poetical; it cannot hope to be exact and final in any utterance, for in the blaze of light in which it stands it looks out, not towards darkness, but towards indefinite ranges of light, and it does not dare to say that it has seen all or can see all. It is this latter aspect of truth which compels us to seek it, not one by one, but as co-labourers in various groups, and by imagination at least in a universal humanity which includes all men of all ages, past, present, and to come.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE WORLD

In the nineteenth century one of the heated discussions about truth was whether anything could be averred to be knowable. There is the pebble on the sands, said a popular philosopher: you see it and think you know it; but to know it, you must know its history, and that involves a knowledge of all the geological ages through which it has passed; moreover, it has been worn to its present roundness and smoothness by innumerable tides, and this fact insists that we know the history of the influence of the heavenly bodies upon the earth. So a relentless logic then says that to be quite thorough we must know the secrets of all the universe, for the whole universe has had its influence upon that pebble lying modestly on the sand. The nineteenth century was con-

siderably impressed with this exposition of the unknowable; but at length it shook itself free from this exclusive view of truth as a concept of mere negative accuracy. Men arose who said that to have infinite spaces of ignorance is not to condemn the knowledge which we do have; and so, in the place of the unknowable, they placed the idea of the unknown. In that moment philosophy took into account the immortality of the race, for there was the vision that humanity as an interrelated whole, made up of individuals and groups of individuals, should go out upon this endless quest of knowing the truth. There was to be the endless attainment of the truth: humanity was not only to seek, but, as it had found truth in the past, so it should go on finding it through eternity. And

to live with such an endless end in view is to live as if the race were immortal.

Through the same years when this discussion was proceeding, there was the rise in all departments of knowledge of what we call specialists. Time had been when a member of any learned profession expected to have about the same fund of information which his neighbour had acquired. Then a small section of the field was chosen to be as thoroughly known as possible. Thus that valuable member of the community known as the family physician is to-day either supplanted or, more wisely, supplemented. When he finds a disease too perplexing for his own general fund of knowledge and skill, the family physician turns to the specialist who gives his whole time to the study

of that especial disease: he may consult him, personally or through one of his books; or he may turn the case quite over to him. So it is with all branches of knowledge. We appreciate as our fathers did not appreciate that search for truth is a coöperative pursuit. While one is busied over one tiny corner, others are cultivating their particular plots, and in some way these sectional accomplishments are brought together as the years pass, and the great body of truth is increased. For no sane discoverer dares to isolate his findings; he must relate his discovery to the discoveries of other men, lest his unrelated truth turn upon him, as it were, and contradict itself. It is not only groups of humanity here and there who must search for the truth; but it is all

groups bound together as one organism which in the last analysis can be trusted to give a solid verdict. Zoölogy and medicine and electricity and poetry and theology and biology and art and geology and history are but a few of the departments which must not only gather up their specializations within themselves, but must cast them down before an all-inclusive synthesis. When humanity holds before itself the ideal of seeking the truth, that moment it postulates its immortality. For only eternity is long enough to complete the search.

The university is the group within humanity whose primary function is to seek the truth. Other groups may seem at least to have the truth subordinated, however slightly, to some other quality,

such as physical welfare, or spiritual salvation, or love. A university is supposed to be created and to exist for the search of the truth, at whatever penalty to what are called more practical interests. If the truth discovered compels a revolution in the Church, the university must contend for that revolution. If it shows that a modern state is advancing upon falsehood, there again the university must foster revolution. If it shows that an accepted system of economics is not based upon truth, it must face the epithets of scorn which always include the word "academic," and plead for a revolution in business.

This quiet search for the truth is full of hazard. Every university, to be a university, must be free. This will doubtless give liberty to the erratic

teacher whose prejudices and dreams will make him teach lies. But it is better to have the defects of the quality than not to have complete freedom; for out of it will come the earnestness which makes a teacher not only diligent in seeking the truth but most carefully responsible in uttering that only which he is thoroughly convinced to be true: he will often say, "I do not know," or "I can see no farther than that." And the ultimate safety is in the community of teachers; for the errors of one will be offset and corrected by the clearheadedness of others. The university is committed to the immortal task of finding and declaring the truth; and the seriousness and honesty of its conception of its function will denote whether it is ephemeral or eternal.

Within this function of the university is its will to inspire in the young a love of the truth. It is no accident that on the seals of many universities we find among other words *veritas*, *lux*, or *illuminatio*. Such words are as beacons shining over the hills of knowledge. The story is told of Spencer and Huxley that one day they were speaking together of the satisfactions of their individual lives. "When I am gone," said Spencer, "my only hope is that I shall have accomplished something which shall be associated with my name in the future." To this Huxley answered, "I do not care for so much as that: all I want to be sure of is that, when I am done, the truth shall have had a little push." Huxley's is the true university spirit. That is the zeal for

truth which every university must desire to give to its pupils.

I remember hearing many years ago, in an academic classroom, an inspiring lecture on the Epistle to the Romans. The teacher was giving his exposition with shining eyes: St. Paul seemed to live before that little group of young men. Then some one asked what St. Paul meant by a certain sentence. "I don't know," was the answer of the wise scholar. "That is one of the questions I intend to ask St. Paul when I see him." That man inspired in his listeners a love of the truth. Truth was seen to be an immortal search: this world was not enough for even a decent beginning in the search for it. Questions must be asked in worlds to come.

I spoke of the sacrifice involved in discrimination. Truth also involves sacrifice. One of the promises made to the infant Church was that the Spirit of God should guide it into all truth. The officers of the Church who have taken this promise seriously and receptively have most often been the martyrs. Conventionality or worldliness or positive badness has again and again hardened the heart of the Church, so that the man who has listened attentively to the Spirit of Truth has received a message cutting athwart all the selfishness and complacency of the age. What has called itself orthodoxy has attempted to persecute the truth which is fresh from the life of God, and the prophet who has been the medium of this truth has been stoned, burned, torn asunder,

crucified. What has been acquired in academic shade is forced by its conscience to come out into the light to die. By the very choice of physical safety or loyalty to the truth, the truth requires its votary to announce whether he lives for this life or the life to come.

> Though love repine, and reason chafe,
> There came a voice without reply, —
> "'T is man's perdition to be safe,
> When for the truth he ought to die."

Each martyr so dying for the truth has become the centre of new life for the future of the Church; and when an age is an age of martyrs, when many saints are not only willing to die for the truth, but do die for it, then truth flames up like a mighty torch, and men ever after go back to that age to read the

utterance of important truth. This loyalty to truth even unto death is a witness to immortality before which both the indifferent and the scoffer veil their eyes.

Truth on its active side is justice. When Necker was Minister of Finance to Louis XVI, an influential lady of the court came to make a request (which was not unusual) that he give her from the public treasury one thousand crowns. When he refused, the lady asked in astonishment, "What can a thousand crowns be to the King!" "Madam," answered Necker, "a thousand crowns are the taxes of a whole village." To see the naked fact was Necker's genius for the truth; to apply it in his office was his genius for justice. Democracy is seeing the same truth in the waging

of war. A despotism may go to war for ambition or for a grudge: either it does not see the misery of those who must pay the cost, or it viciously does not care. A democracy, if it has great-hearted and clear-seeing leaders, will allow war only when a supreme principle is at stake, only when the end to be fought for is one which deserves the extremities of sacrifice. And when the honest statesman has swept his eye over the people whose cause he pleads, he knows by his very discernment of the truth, that this world is not long enough to give justice to those who have suffered from the errors of the blind or the unscrupulous. As truth requires immortality for its consummation, so also does justice, which is truth in action. For not till men know the

truth can justice prevail; and however much good men may desire it, they cannot be just till they are wise, and they cannot be wise till — all the world helping them — they know the truth. And that, once more, needs immortality.

IV

To Discrimination and Truth I now add the word *Hope*. By hope I mean such belief in humanity that one can rationally expect it to escape from its sin and turmoil. People can be found who believe that it is possible on this side of death for an individual here or there to attain perfection; but I never have met any one who was optimist enough to believe that in this world humanity as a whole could become completely righteous. To have a hope that

humanity can attain the will always to think and to do such things as are good requires nothing less than a confidence in immortality. Accordingly, one who believes in immortality for the race will show his belief by a corresponding hope; or, if this seem unnecessarily definite, we can at least say that no one can have this hope who does not trust in the opportunity which a future life shall give. "It is not," writes a shrewd man, "the prosperity of the wicked which is the staggering fact, but his sin; and the real reason why we should desire a life after death is not so much that we may be rewarded for being as good as we are, but that we may have a chance to become better." Immortality is the only answer to a rational hope for the race.

This hope must show itself in vari-

ous ways. The first of these is in a recognition of the difficulties. To almost every man it is plain that there is such a thing as sin. Towards an Eternal Right or towards one another men have so misbehaved that the world is filled with the results of their deeds. Some unhappiness comes in the natural course of things, but all through history acute minds have attributed a vast amount of the misery of earth to men's abuse of the moral law. These disastrous consequences have not been visited always or only upon the offenders, each man reaping the exact results of his own misdoing; but they have been visited upon humanity as a whole. One has sown; a neighbour, a grandchild, a being in another continent, or a whole nation, has reaped the sowing.

The difficulty is further increased by the well-assured fact that progress has been made very slowly out of the wretched tangle. Man has lived on the globe many thousand years, but through times of which we have any record he has not been very different from what he is to-day. There is no sound reason why we should think the hell-like spots of London, Berlin, or New York a bit better than the corresponding sections of Athens, Babylon, or Ur of the Chaldees. And noble as are the Christian saints of to-day, one cannot quite congratulate one's self that they are more consistently heroic and good than the saints of the first Christian centuries. From science, with its doctrine of evolution, we gain the courage to believe that in spite of appearances there has

been moral and spiritual growth in these less plastic millenniums, just as there was physical growth in the more fluid ages before. But even science coldly warns us that evolution has now these many centuries subsided into a snail-like advance. Here, on the threshold, we feel the hopelessness of completing the renovation of humanity in a world like our own, however long time may last.

Another way in which hope for the race will show itself is in throwing itself against these recognized difficulties and in extorting from the present order some demonstration of its power to grow. For we need repeatedly to remind ourselves that this world is probably joined to the next so closely that we shall awake in the new environment

to find ourselves exactly what we were when we breathed our last earthly breath. If humanity is to advance with any appreciable momentum it must begin to do so, and the beginning may be found to be no easier in a future world than here. To have hope for humanity means, therefore, that we are not postponing our efforts either individually or corporately, but are minded to turn our hope into action at once. It is this instinct which forces the Christian physician to keep his patient alive just as long as he can, though he know that a future awaits this patient the other side of death, and though every indication lead him to expect that the days of life here remaining will be painful. He may say that it is his profession to keep life; but back of this mere professional instinct is the

higher instinct, the instinct to give his patient the utmost use of the earthly opportunity.

What we see for the individual, we see in exactly the same degree for the race: we are instinctively sure that as a race we are expected to make the most of this earthly life. Each stage is expected to gather its share of momentum which shall at length carry humanity rapidly forward towards perfection. The pessimist, knowing the deep-seated corruption of his country, may cry out that the nation is not worth saving, and refuse all effort to help it to righteousness; the candid man with hope in his heart, knowing precisely the same black facts, will bend all his power to persuade his countrymen to work with him for a prompt reform. Though nothing

be able to rescue the nation in this dispensation, it may carry the ideals and hopes of its founders and reformers into the new life, and what was begun here may proceed to its immortal fruition.

Side by side with this effort to extort growth must be patience. In his "Liberty of Prophesying," Jeremy Taylor tells a legend of Abraham. A strange old man, stooping with weary age, came one night to the door of Abraham's tent; Abraham received him kindly, washed his feet, and bade him enter and sup with him. But when the old man confessed himself a worshipper of the fire only, and refused to conform to Abraham's religious views, Abraham, zealously angry, cast him out. Presently the Lord spoke to Abraham: "Where is the stranger?" "He would not call

upon Thee," answered Abraham; "so I thrust him away." "I," said the divine Voice, "have suffered him these hundred years; couldest not thou endure him for one night?"

This old tale, had it been understood, might have saved many a cruel act done in the name of religion or patriotism. We must be eager to have men see the divine beauty as we see it; but we may not hasten their coming to the Light by applying thumb-screws or setting the rack in motion. A nation at war may believe that the immediate hope of the world lies with the assurance of the victory of its arms; but it may not hasten the victory by mean trickery or contemptible and illegal warfare. Theodore Parker, in his haste to reach the abolition of slavery, said,

"God is not in a hurry, but I am." That short sentence summarizes the folly of impatience. The zealous reformer with the divine hope in his heart is so confident of the outcome that he can afford to work both without haste and without rest. He shall do his full share to start the humanity with which he has contact towards its goal, but even if the progress is slow, he will still hope. The main issue is that a vital beginning shall be made. A dependence on immortality can then assure the final victory.

In this context we may remind ourselves of two historic instances which are in a measure parts of the same event. One is the Messianic Hope of Israel. That hope was never realized in a form which those who dreamed it

through the years before Christ would have recognized. The Christian world believes that the hope was fulfilled in a way which transcended the most venturesome of prophets. Instead of an earthly kingdom was a spiritual; instead of a conqueror of nations was a conqueror of the human heart; instead of a terrible King was a loving and sympathetic Friend. Unlike as the hope seemed, outwardly, to its answer in history, there is no doubt that the nation inspired by the hope was made ready to receive that better Gift, just because it had hoped with all its heart and mind and soul.

We, too, must in our time have our Messianic Hope. We are hoping for a perfected humanity transfigured into the image of Christ. We announce our pro-

grammes and panaceas. We deftly draw pictures of what ought to be. We dare to begin our part in making the world like our dreams, leaving the end reverently and trustingly to God and immortality. When the new heaven and the new earth are come, I am quite sure that we shall find our Messianic Hope far short of the bold and beautiful solution which God shall give to us, and far different from it. But I am also sure of this: we shall not be mocked because of our effort to see the distant scene. As the Messianic Hope had its share towards making possible the Greatness of two thousand years ago, so our Messianic Hope will have its part in bringing into eternity the Greatness which God longs to give to humanity.

The other historic instance closely related to the Messianic Hope is the way Christ, having come, used hope in His mission to men. We cannot explain Him, but we know that His influence upon frail and sinning humanity was His most wonderful miracle, a miracle which is as unique in history as it is unquestioned. He transformed individual men, and later, invisible, He transformed cities and nations. How did He do it? How did Simon, untrustworthy, volatile, impertinent, become the patient and reliable leader, St. Peter? We may not know fully; but one element in the change was Christ's hope for this blundering fisherman. Christ believed in the possibility of Simon's stability till Simon believed in himself, and really became a Rock. The man who had de-

nied his Master became as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, the refuge of men blinded by the tempest.

This one instance must suffice to suggest to us how we may help to bring the world towards the best we can dream for it: we must have hope for the outcast and the despised; we must have hope for the crooked politician and the evasive ecclesiastic; we must have hope for the commercialized city, daft over its material bigness and blind to its vulgarity and cheapness; we must have hope for the nation sliding calmly into easy compromise, an opportunist in days of world-warfare, confusing duty with profit; even for the wide world, enmeshed in anger and strife, we must have hope: and, if our hope is the real thing, it will flash from our

eyes to kindle hope in others, till from life to life it passes with pentecostal power to give hope to those for whom we hope, till Christ in us gives them the beginning of a new life, which having begun shall not end, but shall go on to its fulfilment from this life into the next, and crowned at length by the complete opportunity of immortality.

If we really believe in immortality for humanity, we shall be possessed by an undaunted hope for it. And that hope shall begin to bear fruit now.

V

Discrimination, Truth, Hope are the words I have named to express our belief in immortality when we think of humanity in its larger relationships: I add only one other word, *Love*.

I have in another connection referred to the Larger Hope, the hope that God will bring every individual personality into his happiness. I have already shown that such a belief is a limitation of human liberty: the self-willed, who have hitherto, by their own choice, remained outside God's friendship, will in some manner be obliged to change their natures. There are undoubted difficulties in the hypothesis of the Larger Hope. It is sometimes held airily by expansive natures as if there were nothing easier than to persuade every one in the world to be gentle and loving and good,— that is, suitable for the kingdom of heaven. But difficult as the hope may be, it is not more difficult than the Larger Despair; and, whatever the difficulties of logic, it is certain that every

loving man ought to long that the Larger Hope should prove to be true.

All I wish to insist upon just here is that the Larger Hope imposes upon one who believes in it, or thinks that he believes in it, definite responsibilities. One of these is that the man who is so generous as to hope that he will find all men in the kingdom of heaven must begin to live on intimate terms with all sorts of people now. He cannot with any self-respect ask God to love what he does not at least try to love.

I state the proposition thus boldly because the Larger Hope is sometimes cast up to Heaven as a challenge: God having made all men, is the frequent plea, and having put them into a rather shabby environment, must bring them all out to an equal plane of comrade-

ship and bliss at the end. Very well,—what is the pleader willing to do now to share his company and blessings with the soiled, the crusty, the crude, the proud, the bigoted, the Becky Sharps, the Pecksniffs, the Bill Sykeses, and all the rest? How far is he willing to allow himself to be the means through which God shall begin now to admit all men into a gracious and refined Christian fellowship? This does not mean walking by the open doors of hospital wards and seeing the motley company cared for when ill; it does not mean meeting them for a few minutes in some court-room to which he goes from curiosity; it does not mean looking them over in some great ocean steamer,—to the finical person it does not make much difference whether the glance be down into

the steerage or back into the worldly and complacent throng who occupy first cabins. No! it means loving these different people of varied temperaments and attainments; it means a longing to sit down to talk with them by the hour, the day, the week, just as one would enjoy a long visit with some old friend. For there are to be no distinctions: all are to fare alike. The pleader's sense of justice demands it!

It sounds impossible. For a good many people it is impossible at present. But it is not impossible for some people even now; and it might become possible for every person,—if he had enough love in him. There are some wonderfully attractive men and women who seem at home anywhere. They go in and out of all sorts of homes. The

crabbed find that they can smile when such visitors come through their doors. The shiftless and untidy rearrange the furniture so that the room is not so bad as it seemed before the guest came. The cantankerous and the bitter cease reviling for half an hour, and find some pleasant word to say of a neighbour. The vile forget their villainy, and offer to help a good cause. These men and women who are able to be simple and genuine friends with all kinds of people are the only real reasons which the world has for believing in the Larger Hope: they have enough love from on high to carry heaven into homes both nasty and disagreeable, whether rich or poor, and they can and do receive the only adequate response, love for love. By their

love they believe in immortality for humanity.

When all is said, how can any loving heart endure to think of an immortality where he shall not share the best God gives him with all kinds of people? For it is the essence of love that it is unselfish, that it thinks of all the people who are forlorn and unhappy and left out. So if such a person aglow with love should come to the immortal life with all its new opportunities for joy, and should find that some one he had known on earth was not within the circle of the opportunity,—an old reprobate perhaps for whom he only had affection, a selfish, very prosperous, and notable woman to whom he only had been kind, or a scapegrace of a boy cast out by his family in whom he only

had believed, — if this person were not there, I say, how long would the saint, overflowing with God's forgiving love, stay quietly enjoying his peace? Not one moment I am perfectly sure, even as Andrew when he first saw the kingdom of heaven in the face of Jesus Christ, stayed not an instant, but ran to fetch the wayward Simon, that they might together listen to the Master's talk.

Heaven is not won, I think, by a man's own goodness. If we may imagine that only one man were good enough to win heaven, lack of wide fellowship would make heaven doleful for that good man, because goodness is, first of all, love. The good man wants the unselfish joy of knowing that others are as happy as he; so he must bring

all he can with him. The Great Supper must be furnished with guests, else there is no tasting the feast. So out into the by-ways and hedges must go the true servant of the Lord of the Supper, to find them which were not bidden, that they come after all and sit down with the Most Loving. Then the joy is complete.

In an unconventional form this is what we mean by the missionary spirit. Strange criticisms are made by the man outside the Church, and often by the man in it, of the futility of sending teachers and doctors and preachers to non-Christian lands. Why should we not confine our benevolent efforts to our own poor or degraded? Why should we not let these foreigners alone to work out their own problems in their

own way? The only answer is that we believe that we have a unique privilege and we want to share it now. We believe in the brotherhood of man; and we want to share what is to us most precious with Chinamen and Indians and Africans and every other race of men. The Larger Hope hovers over our love, and we wish to show the reality of our faith in the longing that this hope be true by inviting to our fellowship those who now seem to have less than we have. Real love never stays at home, but, by the very richness of its devotion to family and parish and city and country, presses out into the edges of humanity and claims humanity as its own.

When John Bright's wife lay dead, his friend Cobden came to console him.

And these are the words with which Cobden appealed to Bright's love for his wife: "There are thousands of houses in England at this moment where wives, mothers, and children are dying of hunger. Now, when the first paroxysm of your grief is past, I would advise you to come with me, and we will never rest till the Corn Laws are repealed. John Bright accepted the challenge, and won the gratitude of the poor of England. The love learned at his own fireside went out to the oppressed; and the poor loved him. Three old men came into Manchester one day to hear Bright speak once more. When they saw him come to the platform they all three broke down and burst into tears. Their love for him was so great that they could not contain it. That is

the sort of experience which makes one ready for immortality. The Larger Hope seems possible.

It will be joy to meet all the great and noble of all ages who by their own strength have won the crown of life; but it will be greater joy to meet in the life to come the people of all sorts and conditions who by our love and friendship have come there. And the joy greater still will be to take their hands and to go running swiftly with them out into the farther rims of twilight and darkness, seeking some who have been forgotten, or who never understood that they were really wanted. And thus the love learned on earth will be the blessing of immortality. In the light of Him who is the Source of Love, it will be the joy of heaven. This is the immor-

tality begun on earth which Matthew Arnold found in his great father and in others of a similar unselfishness: —

> Servants of God! — or sons
> Shall I not call you? because
> Not as servants ye knew
> Your Father's innermost mind,
> His, who unwillingly sees
> One of his little ones lost —
> Yours is the praise, if mankind
> Hath not as yet in its march
> Fainted, and fallen, and died!
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Ye, like angels, appear,
> Radiant with ardour divine.
> Beacons of hope, ye appear!
> Languor is not in your heart,
> Weakness is not in your word,
> Weariness not on your brow.
> Ye alight in our van! at your voice,
> Panic, despair, flee away.
> Ye move through the ranks, recall
> The stragglers, refresh the outworn,
> Praise, re-inspire the brave.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE WORLD

Order, courage, return;
Eyes rekindling, and prayers,
Follow your steps as ye go.
Ye fill up the gaps in our files,
Strengthen the wavering line,
Stablish, continue our march,
On, to the bound of the waste.
On, to the City of God.

III

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF GOD FOR IMMORTALITY

I

In Shakespeare's *King Henry V*, Mistress Quickly describes the death of Falstaff, who had died in her inn. When she knew that the end was near, she tried to reassure him with the thought that he was not dying. "'How now, Sir John!' quoth I: 'What, man! be o' good cheer.' So he cried out, 'God, God, God!' three or four times. Now I, to comfort him, bid him he should not think of God; I hoped there was no need to trouble himself with any such thoughts yet." Mistress Quickly is representative of a large number of peo-

ple who believe that to think of God is wholly unpractical. But the truth is that, since we live in a world made and controlled by Him, to think of God is at all times the most practical occupation in which we can engage. We cannot therefore consider our responsibility to immortality without weighing all the evidence that we can discover of the responsibility which God assumes towards it.

It is sometimes said that every man creates his own God. The element of truth in this flippant remark is that every man has his own conception of the nature and character of God. The existence and stability of the Divine Being is no more put in jeopardy by the complex views about Him than is the existence of any human character who is

estimated in various ways by those who know him with varying degrees of intimacy. Further, just as it makes a difference in the acts of persons when they differently regard a fellow man, — as, for instance, the three men in the parable who from their lord received respectively five talents, two talents, and one talent, — so it makes a difference in our acts when we differently regard the Lord God. In the parable the man with one talent said that he knew his master to be a hard man, reaping where he had not sown, therefore his fear made him hide the money, so that it was useless. In exactly the same way men's idea of God may be such that they will waste their lives from a sort of spite against what they think God's injustice or neglect.

We see this principle in the attitude of nations towards the Divine Idea. Israel, Greece, Rome were what they were largely because of the conceptions which they variously had of God. And in nothing has national expression been more significant than in its idea of a future life which has directly risen out of the nation's idea of God. Old Testament scholars have amply proved that by a divine education the ancient Hebrews passed from a monolatrous to a monotheistic conception of God. Moreover, the righteous character of God was progressively revealed to the nation, and the great prophets, from 800 B. C. onward, insisted that, to serve the righteous God, the people must make the spiritual effort to be righteous also. At the beginning of the

religious growth of the nation, so far as scholars can trace it, ideas about the future life seem to have been coloured largely by the influence of the religious ideas of neighbouring nations; but when the Hebrews acquired a doctrine of the future life distinctly their own, it was a doctrine exactly conforming to their idea of God. This future life required righteousness, and its main joy was that it was life in a divine community. The gods of the Greeks, on the other hand, were both immoral and selfish: so it was not strange that the Greeks thought it proper that the base Menelaus should be translated to the Isles of the Blessed; and even Plato, with his exalted moral conception of individual immortality, thought it right that the immortal individual should bliss-

fully ignore the fate of the community. Of Romans there was none finer than Marcus Aurelius. As a Stoic he had his theology partly from Greece, but his sense of order, law, and justice made his thought characteristically Roman. Marcus Aurelius was quite sure that the gods exist, and, though much perplexed by what he thought manifestations of their power, he was also sure that they are just. He was not clear how the future might be: he inclined to think our bodies would go to earth and our souls to the divinity who gave them; but he was satisfied that whatever might be in store for us after death was just. In the light of this belief Marcus Aurelius lived his upright life; his idea of God governed both thoughts and acts.

And so it has been of all times and peoples. The Buddhist, with his idea of God as Peace, tried to be lost in meditation in this world, and dreamed of Nirvana at the last. The Mahomedan saw God in self-indulgent power, and accordingly lived to the flesh, and looked forward to a heaven of carnal delights. The barbarians of Northern Europe thought of God as a great warrior, and therefore lived to fight, and thought to be gathered in the end to the armed camp of heaven. Even to our North American Indians both heaven and earth were hunting-grounds, because the Great Spirit was the Maker of mountains and streams, where He wished His children to hunt and fish. Everywhere one looks, in history or in life, the idea of immortality is seen to de-

pend upon the idea men may have of the Invisible God. We may therefore examine with earnest care what responsibility God, as we know Him, takes towards our immortality, always remembering how our own responsibility is reflected in it.

II

The first fact which confronts us is that God has so made the world that he does not permit us who are in this life to know anything of the life which is to be. How shall we imagine that for this fact (of which in our grief we often bitterly complain) God takes the responsibility?

I see two answers. The first of these is that, being the Supreme Master of life, God means us to make the most of

this period of our schooling. A boy may be indolent and sluggish in his lessons because he is thinking too vividly of the business career to which he aspires. He may, at every opportunity, be running about through offices and shops, watching the leaders or the subordinates in business, and dreaming all the time how it will seem when he is in these men's places; meanwhile he is scorning to study Latin and French and Algebra, because they belong to his petty and dreary world of school, and have nothing to do with what he calls real life. Perhaps his parents do not seriously upbraid him, because they believe that this enthusiasm for his career will more than offset his diligence with books. But what is the actual result, as many an instance shows? This boy who tries to enter the

second period of his life while still plodding through the first period, again and again reaches the second period, not only ill-equipped but sated with his dreams before he has put his hand to the work which ought to accomplish his dreams. And his companion, who apparently is so absorbed in the work and play of school-days that he does not so much as think what is to come, is again and again his distant superior in the hard battle of mature life when it is reached.

It is quite the same with a young person who is discovered to have a talent or even a genius for music. Bewitched with the thrilling experience of astonishing his elders by his improvisations, he smiles patronizingly on all his teachers who plead with him to do his dull

exercises and study his dull books, and fancies himself already to be the peer of the great master whose performance he has heard. Of course, if this young bit of vanity is allowed to persist in his stubborn course, he will reach the time when he ought to be a marvellous musician, only a failure, — one more of those people who had it in them to be geniuses, and missed their opportunity by skipping their preparation — a defect which genius never forgives.

Now is it not reasonable to believe that the world of the immortal life dovetails into this earthly experience, in some such fashion as the mature life of man dovetails into the period of his preparation? May not this earthly life make ready more adequately for the heavenly life because that heavenly life

cannot be definitely pictured? May its reality not be thought to be so surpassingly beautiful that if we did know about it, even the most conscientious of us would be listlessly dreaming of it, while the humdrum work beneath our hands was either slighted or wholly ignored? Something like this has happened in periods of history when the saints have dwelt in detail upon what they believed the glories of heaven. Too much thought about the golden streets of the new Jerusalem has allowed the streets of many a mediæval town to be soiled and foul. A too intent gaze upon the serried ranks of white-robed heavenly saints has blinded certain ascetic heroes to those who ought to have been made saints on earth, and whose robes are anything but white.

There were Puritan saints who had no doubt about the bliss of heaven, but they succeeded in making this world a kind of dungeon for their families lest they think too highly of it: and our thought of heaven is not to-day more cheerful because we think of meeting there these same Puritan saints who despised this world and its normal joys. When all is told, we are quite sure that the most congenial saints in heaven will be those unselfish and radiant spirits who bravely met what they found in this life, rejoiced in God's sunshine, made little of the rain, and in both bright weather and dark forgot their own present and future in bringing comfort and help to the burdened and oppressed. They will have made themselves more fit for heaven, and they

will have made heaven more glad, because while on earth they did not try to probe secrets of the future which God obviously meant to remain secrets, and they lived their hard and beautiful lives on earth as if it were heaven itself. In such lives I see the first full and eloquent reason why I think God is willing to be responsible, even though we murmur, for our not knowing any detail of the manner of our future life.

The second reason for God's withholding from us news of the country beyond death seems to me quite as clear: I cannot believe that our present consciousness could by any means comprehend any descriptions which might be given us. There is much, we are well aware, in this present visible uni-

verse which is invisible to our eyes: the telescope and the microscope reveal so much beyond what we can see with the naked eye that we know that there are whole universes of mystery beyond the realms which the telescope opens in greatness and which the microscope opens in littleness. Occasionally a sensitive photographic plate catches the view of an asteroid millions of miles away which, through even the strongest telescope, the eye cannot see; and at the other extreme, scientists are telling us, an electron is so small that an electron is to an atom what a pin-head is to the dome of St. Paul's, London. It is the same way with sounds. We are growing extremely modest when we look or listen: the world we live in now is quite beyond our capacity to realize.

Why should we expect to be told of another?

I have more than once referred to a conviction of this generation that the world to come meets this in a close and intimate way, so that perhaps the day before death and the day after death may make the day between seem an almost imperceptible transition. This might be thought to militate against the conviction which I hold just as strongly; namely, that we could not understand if we were told the news of that new life. For the fact is that the passing from one to the other is a transition, and the new life instantly is different from the old, however closely it may join itself to the old. We can judge this most wisely by the transitions in our life here. The transition from child-

hood to maturity is a dim period, but the child and the man live to a large extent in different worlds. The man has more or less vague remembrances of the world of his childhood, but unless his sympathy is uncommonly keen he has forgotten more than he remembers. When he became a man he put away childish things; he entered a door into a new sphere, and the door has all but closed behind him. The child, on the contrary, though he may little think it, is facing the future as if it were an unknown continent. As he sees his elders pass through certain experiences which now make them laugh and sing, and again make them sigh and weep, he too may laugh or weep with his childish sympathy; but when he asks why his elders rejoice or mourn, he can get

no satisfactory answer. He may be told that his father is glad because a reform mayor has been elected in a certain great city, and there is hope that the whole country will feel the inspiration of this moral victory; moreover news has just come that the Turks have been driven out of Constantinople, and the Greek liturgy has again been said in St. Sophia. This is all clear and definite language: the child's eyes grow big with wonder as he listens; but for the life of him he cannot see why any one should find any cause for excitement when such unintelligible things have happened. If they had only told him that his lost dog had been found, or that he was to be taken to visit his grandfather, he would have understood. Then there is the still harder tale:

why do grown men and women weep? When he sees the tears filling the eyes of one he loves, he asks why. A letter falls from the dear hand, and he is told tenderly and caressingly that a relative whom he has never seen has just died: "What is death?" he asks. "Is the place where dead people go beautiful? Then why, oh why," he cries, "do you weep?" He throws himself into his mother's arms and sobs with her; but he does not know why. Perhaps his philosophy of death is better than hers, but it is wholly different. No words can make him understand why in their deepest moods his elders do what they do, and say what they say. They have passed a mysterious boundary in life which is as the boundary between two worlds. May it not be that it is in this way that at

death those we love pass a filmy line which admits them to a quite new experience; and may it not be that God fails to explain to his earthly children, not because He is less loving than earthly fathers, but because He is infinitely wiser? — for we with our consciousness fitted for this stage of life cannot understand the language which alone describes the stage ahead of us?

To a slighter degree we see the same principle in different ages in history, even if they touch one another. The very old man who has been active in the days of his strength laments that he does not comprehend the new sights and sounds. He does not see how the new ways of doing business can be honourable; he does not understand the new books; the people who proclaim them-

selves orthodox in the Church have not his orthodoxy; the radical reformers of society and government seem to him either demented or possessed with devils. He says to himself that he is hopelessly conservative, and that it is probably just as well that he will not stay much longer in this world, since it is beyond both his sympathy and his understanding. Some enthusiastic young friend tries to make him see that history is repeating itself, that he himself in the vigour of youth was radical, and being sure of the integrity of his dreams clung to them till he helped the world by their fulfilment; and now, says the apologist for his time, the young radicals of this day are trying to do the same task for the coming age: the world is safe after all. But the old man shakes his head:

he does not believe it; in any case he cannot expect ever to understand it. There have been old men who have never ceased to be radicals, who seemed always to be living in the ages ahead of them, — men like Socrates, Roger Bacon, and Galileo. But though each tenaciously guarded his contribution for the future, I suspect that in general each had his misgivings about the strenuous youth who did not happen to look to him for guidance. Men who have won great victories in their time cannot believe that the battles they see preparing for the new time are to be really worth fighting.

The transition from century to century is not so great as the transition from childhood to maturity; therefore its lesson cannot be so marked. But it sug-

gests a method which evidently pervades all life. We ought not to be surprised that it puts its mark upon the transition from life through death to future life. That transition must be greater than the transition from age to age here; it must be as great, at least, as the transition from childhood to manhood, where we can see its wholesome benefit. We may reverently say that God keeps the secrets of the immortal life against the day of our coming to it, as he keeps the secrets of the stages in our life here; and He does it, we may as reverently think, in order that we may live each day of opportunity as if it were eternity.

III

Another criticism often made of the world is that there is a reckless quantity of everything, including human beings. Some insects by myriads are born and perish in an afternoon. Can they serve any use? One cannot roam over a summer hillside without seeing the fruits of wild life going, as one murmurs, to waste. And what shall we think of what seems to us the superfluous humanity of the earth, — the people who have apparently no joy and who bring no joy, — the odious, the degraded, the maimed, the defective? Often reflection upon immortality has been marred by the thought of the indiscriminate multitudes of people who have existed through the ages of history. How can they all be brought

to unity? How can any conceivable heaven contain them? William James, with his genius and originality, once attacked the problem in his Ingersoll Lecture; and only a few days ago some one, with imagination and assurance and a faculty for reckoning, declared that all the people now alive and all who had lived could be seated comfortably in the State of New Jersey, with some space between the chairs! But most people are worried not so much by the excessive numbers of humanity as by the apparently useless or wasted lives. Can God, they ask, really feel responsible for all the souls whom He has allowed to come into the world?

We shall reach a clearer answer if we examine some of the details of what we are apt to call the lavish overpro-

duction of nature. It is a scandal to many that of the hundreds of acorns produced by an oak only a few become trees in their turn. The assumption is that the only legitimate use of an acorn is to grow into a tree. Probably no one has ever observed nature with the combination of scientific acuteness and poetical appreciation shown by the remarkable French naturalist, Fabre. In one of his books M. Fabre dwells upon the various uses of the acorns. Many of them, he shows, become the birthplace of the elephant beetle. Selecting the point farthest from the cup, the mother bores through it into the tender meat in the extreme opposite end, and there deposits her egg. The young larva, being born, lives first on the tender food in the cup, then on the filings of the long bore. It

is now strong enough to eat the hard meat which remains; and, when the acorn falls to the ground, the little being crawls out and goes into the ground, leaving nothing but a hollow shell. This insect so reared becomes the favorite autumn food of the blackbird, "the minstrel of the forest." Of the acorns which remain, the field mouse takes what it can to store near its nest; and the farmer takes his share for his pigs, and lo! says M. Fabre, we have the most excellent of bacon! If any acorns yet have not been used, they in time fall to dust, and enrich the soil, making the old oak grow more sturdy because of their contribution to its roots; and the fowls of the air come to lodge in its branches, to feast, and to sing, their joy being in some subtle way increased because the acorns

have perished. So it is, according to the great naturalist, that not one acorn is wasted out of all the thousands.

Several years ago I was spending a few weeks in a magnificent wilderness crossed by a transcontinental railway. A number of people were there to rest from hard work and to gather inspiration for work ahead of them. A little way from the railway station one could, by breaking new paths, come upon scenes which possibly no man before had ever beheld. Every moment could be given to the exploration of the beauty and grandeur of nature, which seemed to be thrown at one's feet with a wild extravagance. One day when a train stopped at the station, a traveller alighted and walked as far as the time would allow him. I stood with him on

a little rustic bridge spanning a mountain torrent. Before us loomed the snow-capped summit of a towering mountain; lesser peaks kept it company, with their stern rock and gleaming snow; and in the foreground were the dark green pines, and then the luxuriant undergrowth encouraged by the warm winds from the Pacific. Over all was the sun-filled air, crisp and inspiriting; and there was the music of many waters coming down the steep cascades to join the stream which was pouring over the rocks beneath us. The power of God seemed to come through it all: one felt all weariness taken away; and everything bright and pure and strong seemed possible, if one only could get the forces which God had placed there into one's mind and heart

and soul. Suddenly the traveller turned and said, "What an awful waste of water-power!" He proved to be a notable manufacturer whose mills were on the banks of a New England river; and all he saw in that august scene was a stupendous amount of water-power gone to waste. Obviously it never occurred to him that mountains and glaciers, solemn pines and flowing waters, could have any value but a commercial value. That they might possibly build up the unseen spirit of humanity was altogether beyond his experience or his imagination.

From such thoughts about the acorns and the mountain torrents it is now easy to make a general deduction. If we had sufficient knowledge about the needs of man and the nature around

man, I think we should find that, even in what seems the most ruthless overproduction and the most extravagant waste, there is a real use for everything. God surely is willing to be held responsible for all that He has made and is making.

And thus we return to the thought of the overwhelming number of men. How shall we dare to think it possible that such a motley assembly as humanity can attain to immortality? Some such thought as this was doubtless disturbing the minds of the first Christian disciples, for our Saviour said one day: "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings? And not one of them is forgotten in the sight of God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more

value than many sparrows." That highest of testimony may be put at the end of all our investigation of nature and human nature: it confirms, it reassures, it constructs. God has made worlds full of men, generation after generation. Lavish he has been, but never wasteful. We may venture, on the highest ground, to say that not one of them is forgotten. Ungracious they often are; brutal and false they often are; yes, many are inefficient and blundering, blocking the path of those whose courage and industry would otherwise give them the crown of achievement. For a good many only excuses can be made, and the Great Heart of the world can only cry, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." It is hard to believe that even by the most

generous interpretation such people as these have been of use in this present world, except perhaps to toughen the souls of the saints and heroes who must win in spite of them. If they are useless here, there is only one alternative: the God who made them and is willing to be held responsible for them, must some way still remember them. Are they not of more value than many sparrows? And that can only mean that God, being by His will responsible, is holding for them immortality.

We are brought by such considerations very close to the Larger Hope, of which I have already twice spoken in these lectures. There is such a thing in life as free will; and man must choose whether he will be saint or devil. Even God's utmost responsibility cannot make

man of use, if by forcing him God takes from him that which is God's highest gift, — the gift of self-direction. But all one can learn from the most authoritative sources makes one every day more convinced that God will never shirk His loving responsibility for every child of man to whom He has given a living soul. Through eternity God's yearning Fatherhood will be seeking him. The desperate and wayward soul may go to the utmost bounds of the blackest night, but God will be there. And at some moment of eternity, we may hope (we cannot know) that the scarred and battered being will turn and recognize the Love that is seeking it everywhere, will yield to the high use to which God created it, and will come out into the light of the morning. God has made a practi-

cally infinite host of humanity; but He cares for each individual. He, by His own Word, accepts the responsibility.

IV

Men all on fire to bring in at once the kingdom of heaven are baffled when they look up to the Leader of the universe, because He seems to leave much of the struggle to erring and wavering men, and allows the accomplishment of the brave and good to be counteracted by the mistakes and wilful knavery of the worthless. Why, exclaim these ardent saints, does not God, like a giant among pigmies, thrust in His hand and crush all opposition to His righteousness and love? Why are all the hideous crimes against the true humanity permitted?

If we believe in God as the absolute Master of His universe we can have no doubt that God could make men as perfect as the flowers. He could interfere at every turn with the free will which He would then only apparently give to men, and all their errors and failures would instantly be cancelled. But the price of this perfection would be that men would be stripped of their freedom: they would be reduced to the level of things, — beautiful things to be sure, things like the rose or the shimmering sea, — but still only things.

The all-important difference between a thing and a person is that a person can return by life the love and care which God bestows: a person can be the friend of God; a thing can be only His creature. The only philosophy which

can adequately explain the creation of man is that God is so overwhelmingly the God of Love that He longs to win the love of His creatures. You cannot drive one to love, you can only give love and wait for its return. It is a form of persuasion, if you will, only more. Thus God gives men freedom to do right, or to do wrong, to please Him or to grieve Him, to be His friends or to try to be His enemies.

Just here enters the necessary thought of immortality. For it is quite evident that time is not enough, as our human experience demonstrates, to make this human choice of God complete, either for even the best men individually, or for the race as a whole, — not to speak of the forlorn beings who have altogether missed the way. Immortality

is the extension of man's opportunity. If not in this life, in some of the stages of life beyond it the best men may be trusted to give back to God such a measure of the love which He has given to them that the bestowal of freedom will be justified to the divine plan. And then we must ask wistfully, as we have real love within us, whether the surprising opportunities of eternity will not be sufficient to win those who have misunderstood here, or even those who have contemptuously turned their backs on a Father's plea. Whatever our hopes or our fears, our logic or our instinct, we cannot fail to place before our imagination the possibility.

In all this contemplation we see emerging an outstanding characteristic of God, — His divine patience. God's

patience is part of His responsibility for immortality. All history, so far as we know it, is the record of God's patience. By nature, by prophets, most of all through Christ, He has warned, He has encouraged, He has displayed His love. But to win man's free gift of Himself what has God not borne! Through ages of man's crude vaunting, unrighteous power, and selfish aggrandisement, God has waited. The loathsome sins of the Cæsar Borgias and the Catherine de' Medicis besmirch the pages of history, and yet God does not smite them with His lightnings: He waits for their tyranny to be overpast. The sinister weakness of the Henry the Thirds and the Queen Annes allows villainy to plot its malice in high places, and still those who seem to rule and cannot, continue to sit on

their thrones; God waits for real leaders to arise among the people. Even the Church, which ought always to be counted upon, has had its Alexander the Sixths in Rome, its Torquemadas in Spain, its Dean Swifts in England, its Cotton Mathers in Massachusetts; and, in spite of it all, God's mercy is stretched out still: He waits for the Church to learn pity and tolerance and love. This is not the way the best of men would control history if they could control it: they would smash into it with all their force; they would stamp out the rapacious, the detestable, the slave-maker, and the cruel. As it is, their cry is to God that he will play just such a role: —

Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered:
Let them also that hate him flee before him. . . .
Let the wicked perish at the presence of God.

Long after the Hebrew poet had sung this hymn, Cromwell took the words for his battle-cry, and, facing the worldliness of King Charles's Court, believed himself the scourge of an impatient God. But the most sagacious saints have not found God in the great and strong wind which rends the mountains, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in the still small voice, the voice of waiting for men to understand, the voice of a divine patience. How easy it would be, thinks the man who is only half a saint, to burn up the hopeless, to put the well-intentioned but flimsy into straight-jackets, and to keep a strict

paternal watch over the reasonably good; then God might have a world in which it would be pleasant to dwell. But these unfinished saints do not know the Father of all the living; they do not remember that He would not that any should perish; they forget that even to Christ God permitted crucifixion by men for whom Christ asked forgiveness. God is a God who waits. He is the God of inexhaustible patience.

If history shows such an evident record, what must the days of immortality show but the same patience of God? If God and His angels now rejoice over one sinner who repents more than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance, how can that attitude be anything but an eternal attribute of His will? It must not only be a blessed

aspect of the immortal life of humanity, but it must also be one mighty reason why God should give immortality to those of His creatures upon whom He has bestowed freedom. Browning looked upon the seemingly perfect art of Florence, and then gloomily cast his eye upon the uncouth imperfection of man. Courage returned to him when he remembered that these things of art had only time in store, and so had to be perfect now or else for ever fail; but man had eternity for his development, and thus could outstrip at last the perfection of Michelangelo's David, — the perfection, we may add, permitted by the God of everlasting patience. Through our struggle upward we now are wont to pray to a God whom we can thus address: "O most

mighty God, and merciful Father, who hast compassion upon all men, and who wouldest not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his sin, and be saved." He will not now break the bruised reed, He will not now quench the smoking flax. Can He or will He ever do it ?

Back then we come to the Larger Hope. The mystery of God is blinding because of its light; and though we may be obliged to leave many a subject in the form of questions, it is safer, when we attempt definitions, to say the positive convictions which come to our reason or to our intuition, and to be extremely chary of the negative logic which often slams the door in the face of hope. When we study God's patience in the records of history and

in the manifestation of His glory in the earthly life of Christ, we must wonder whether we can conceive that the Blessed God can be really and completely happy so long as one of His children (for that is His name for us all) is gone astray into the brambles; so long as only one is still unhappy however the man himself may seem to choose his unhappiness; so long as a single man refuses to understand that he is loved by the heavenly King. Logic constantly in theology has grown weary, and has set a limit to God's patience: it has allowed it to last in time, but it has blotted it sometimes from eternity. It is the mother who has a bad son who can tell what the love which God put in her heart can do. This son was repulsive to all but her;

but she still hoped; she waited for him to return to the beauty and kindness of his childhood; she prayed; she longed; she promised God her own life, if He would give goodness to her poor boy. But death crossed this son's path, before she or any one else could see the slightest change. He was still in the far country living with the swine like a beast, and the end came. But is it the end? Is that mother's patience gone; or has she still love and hope for him? Do you not know that, though she be the straightest of Calvinists, she is praying still for that dear child? Is she saying that he has been undutiful, that he has been unforgivably cruel to her, that he has spoiled her life, that he is bringing her grey hairs with sorrow to the grave? No, you know that not one of

these things is true of her prayers: she prays with the same hope with which she prayed when he lay in his cradle, when he spoke his first words, when he threw his arms about her neck and promised never again to grieve her. She is waiting. She is hoping. She is loving. She has patience which she knows will go with her through eternity. Where does she get it? Is it a trick of the devil, an imagination from some imp? Ah! such love does not come from such a source. Whence can such love come but from the central fire of Love, from God! There you see a spark which has flashed from the eternal patience of God. It is to give such patience room that, among other reasons, God has granted to men immortality, — for men's sake, — and for His own.

V

Hardly a man, however brave, can fail at some tragic moment to reproach God with the hardness of life. This hardness does not depend on desert, either individually or collectively. If a man were exactly paid for what he had done, he might preserve Stoic calm. If he took the consequences of being a member of humanity, and so sometimes reaped another man's bad sowings, he might be philosophical about it. But there is hardness in life which would remain even if every individual, acting by himself and as a member of society, had never done a wrong act. There is hardness inherent in human life. For instance, before a man can make his garden, he must chop down the trees,

pull out the stumps, dig out the roots and the stones, and then by some device enrich the soil. It is very hard work. And harder experiences await him: there will be too much rain or too little, too much cold or too much heat, so that he will fear frost and mildew and drought. Besides, there will be the cut-worm and other greedy caterpillars, with all manner of tiny beetles, to threaten his crops; and perhaps the locusts may sweep down some morning to eat every tender shoot. The success of this garden is won only by work and anxiety, and, if life depend upon it, by tragedy also. Then there are the calamitous forces of nature, such as the lightning, the tidal wave, the volcanic eruption, the tornado, the earthquake. It is exceedingly difficult to find a cor-

ner of the earth where some dreadful natural foe does not beset one's peace: if it is none of these things, it may be a malarial climate or the prevalence of some dangerous insect. By skill and care and work some of these dangers may be overcome or at least minimized; but they cannot be wholly eradicated. Harder than any of these physical difficulties are the fierce temptations which beset every living soul. Prosperity, adversity, and the state of life which provides just enough, all have their peculiar kinds of temptation, so beguiling that it seems impossible not to be scorched by them, if not quite ruined. Remorse comes after each yielding, but the memory of it fades; and the temptation, biding its time, reappears with all its appealing grimaces and promises. When

people really wish to be good, why should it be made thus hard to attain goodness?

At the end of the catalogue, — which might be indefinitely prolonged, — is death. The death which one must die for oneself can be accepted on faith as a door to wider and better existence; but the deaths one must endure in the desolation and heart-breaking caused by the vanishing of friends are woefully hard. Faith in God may be stronger than death; but the sorrow and the loneliness are well-nigh unbearable. There is no least doubt that life is hard — hard for every one in one way or another; and, in spite of all the mingling of comfortings and joys, hard to the end.

There have been times when thinkers have tried to relieve God of thrusting

these burdens on men's backs; and have posited a dualism in the governance of the universe, — Nature or Satan, something or somebody, put these thorns on the roses, and God is responsible only for the flowers with their fragrance and beauty. But this evasion is always discredited when men live and think their best. When we see what hardness can do and has done for many an individual, many a family, many a community, we know that it is possible to find a place for hardness in love. A brilliant modern essayist has written, evidently out of his own experience, "If the light is clouded, and the joy is blotted out, and the energy burns low, it is a sign, not that we have failed, but that the mind of God is bent still more urgently upon us." And so we cut the Gordian knot,

and say that God is responsible, by His loving will, for all the hardness of life.

Inevitably we must ask, Why? The answer is similar to the philosophy by which the necessary idea of God's patience is discovered. We think that God is so far the overflowing of love that He made mankind in order to have loving friends, — not only beings to love, but beings to be loved by. Accordingly, He bestows the perilous gift of freedom: He desires, we think, real friends, not mechanically perfect automatons. And now, as we pore over the hardness of life, we read a new revelation of His will for us: He wants not only friends who shall give back some of the love which He gives to them, but He wants also great friends, — friends who have been through hard places, and who have

overcome; friends who have victory written on their foreheads. "Lay a sword upon my coffin, I pray you," said an old poet; "for I have been a brave soldier in the wars for the liberty of mankind." May God not desire friends of whom such words may truthfully be said? I think so.

With this hypothesis in mind, can we not (as a people who try to please God) take our hard times manfully; looking upon them not as obstacles, but as challenges to our possible fibre? If we live on barren wastes, can we not believe in God enough to trust that every hardness conceals some richness; and so, digging deep, bring up, as from some barren Kimberley, the vast wealth which lies beneath? If sorrow leave us forsaken and dreary, can we not lift our heads,

brush the tears away, and go out to seek those whose sorrow is like unto our sorrow, and fill up with sympathy and love the aching void in our hearts, becoming thus a strong tower of defence against the stormy wind, and drawing into the shelter of our strength and peace those who might otherwise faint by the way and be lost in the trackless desert of hopelessness? If a man fails in his work; if all his ambitions tumble about his ears; if he knows that he is what the world calls a ruined man, and there is no chance that in the years left to him he can build up what has fallen, then may he not take this poisoning experience, crush the poison quite out of it, and go running to the others who he may suspect are failing in just the same way, giving them not so much

sympathy as a cry of hope, giving to their weakness and despair a measure of the strength which he has been able to extract from his misery, and saving more than one soul alive?

Even if this world were all, it would be serviceable to make such high use as this of the hardness of life. But lift the curtain, and peer into the life immortal which stretches out and up to the hills of eternity. You may think at first that you can see nothing but the long reaches of space, empty and monotonous. Then, by faith, I am sure you will see something else: you will have a vision of what it is to the most loving God to have through the eternal years loving friends who are strong, and eternally growing stronger; because in the years of earth the conquest was nobly

begun. Every toiler who has sufficient work to need helpers in its performance, knows the joy of finding among the ordinary, routine labourers the men and the women who have had sufficient experience in life, and that experience sufficiently well met, to give them understanding and sympathy and strength. Their eyes answer your best dream for the work; you put your hand to the fulfilment of the dream with new courage. The work is covered with glory and gladness because strong helpers share with you its heaviness and its victory. All this is a poor, dim shadow of what must be in the blessedness of God when His children come to His help, not only with loyalty and love, but also with strength. He gave hardness; they bowed their necks to its weight; they

lifted it by their strength; and now they are co-workers with the Master of the universe; they are men, great and strong.

What shall we say of the man himself who has torn strength from the hardness of life, and with this strength has entered the life immortal? He must confess two truths. The first of these is that life would ultimately be trivial and poor, were it not that hard times strew the pathway. Whether the difficulties shall continue after death we cannot tell; if they continue, the light upon them will be so clear that they can be shouldered without repining. But as one looks back upon the difficult days and years, one may see that God's will or God's permission is bound up with every pain and every hardship which

fell to one's lot. Everything means something. Everything has a divine possibility. We cannot think even of the perfect strength of Christ without remembering the Cross and the way He endured it. Life itself is less than life if it does not contain the strength due to overcoming that which is undeniably hard.

The other truth which a man must confess in the light of his victory is that the hardness of life is not completely intelligible until immortality is recognized as its goal. "To him that overcometh," is the heavenly promise of the Book of Revelation, "to him will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God." So many people suffer to the very end of the earthly journey, with so little chance to turn their

heroic endurance to the gladness of service, that a sane observer cannot believe that in a world where nothing is wasted such victory is to be a mere record: by its very strength and conquest it assumes an opportunity for usefulness. The God who is certainly willing to be responsible for all the stubborn material which this world contains for the cultivation of men's endurance, will just as certainly be responsible for giving this store of power the utmost freedom to be spent for the lasting good of humanity and the beatific vision of God; that is, the return to God of the love He gave, made through tribulation strong, — the love which is strong as death. That means immortality.

Emerson in his last days lost much of his mental faculty. When his friend

Longfellow died Emerson was led to his house, and for a long time he stood looking down into the face of the dead poet. At last he said, "I cannot recall his name, but I know that he was a beautiful soul." Longfellow had borne many sorrows with simple steadfastness, and even to Emerson's waning intelligence the story was plain in the still features. It is a parable of what we may expect to find in the life immortal. There will be myriads, I think, in the world to come who will bear the marks in some way of the silent victories of earth. Their names will never have been chronicled. We shall never have heard that there were such beings. Perhaps they were kept to the four walls of a little room for years. But here they are in the Paradise of God,

—great and strong by reason of their overcoming. And we shall say, "We do not know their names, but we know that they are beautiful souls, — worthy of the Master who seeks their love and their strength."

VI

Earlier in this lecture I suggested two possible reasons why we know no details of the future life; I wish now to add a third reason. May it not be that God keeps from us knowledge of what that life is to be because He wishes us to trust Him rather than to trust our knowledge?

We learn that this life is happier if we simply do our best day by day and leave the consequences in God's keeping. It is folly to be anxious for the

morrow. In the days of the English Commonwealth Bulstrode Whitelock was Ambassador to The Hague. One night he was so worried by thought of the dangers which threatened both Nation and Church that he could not sleep. His old servant, sleeping in the same room, at length spoke: "Sir," he said, "may I ask you a question?" "Certainly," replied the ambassador. "Sir," pleaded the servant, "did God govern the world well before you came into it?" "Undoubtedly," was the answer. "And will He rule the world well when you have gone out of it?" asked the man. "Undoubtedly," said Whitelock. "Then, sir," continued the voice, "can you not trust Him to rule the world well while you are in it?" With this, the story says, the weary statesman turned

on his side and fell asleep. We may surmise that what God asks us to do for eternity is only an extension of a method which He is teaching us by our present experience.

Out of this conjecture flows a principle which turns the conjecture into a practically assured truth. There is something more to be desired than life, than even immortal life, and that is life conscious of the presence and the love of God. At length we come to define immortality as the life which is sustained by the perpetual consciousness of the comradeship, the friendship, the love of God. "This is life eternal," said Jesus Christ, "to know thee, the only God . . ." God, in asking us to believe that He will be responsible for our future, asks us first to feel our responsi-

bility to know Him, and to know Him now. So we lay hold of the essential characteristic of immortality in this period of our schooling, and we advance towards the next period with an always increasing trust.

"I should long ago have killed myself," wrote Tolstoi, "if I had not had a dim hope of finding God. I only really live when I feel and seek Him. . . . And stronger than ever rose up life within and around me, and the light that then shone never left me again." And so a great modern poet cries: —

My God, my God, let me for once look on
Thee
As though not else existed, we alone!
And as creation crumbles, my soul's spark
Expands till I can say, — Even from myself
I need Thee and I feel Thee and I love Thee:
I do not plead my rapture in Thy works

For love of Thee, nor that I feel as one
Who cannot die: but there is that in me
Which turns to Thee.

Again, it was a present experience of which St. Augustine wrote when he expressed his rapturous hope, "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless till it rests in Thee." So too Thomas Aquinas felt that he knew the present fruition of the Godhead. "Here," he said, "the soul in a wonderful and unspeakable manner both seizes and is seized upon, devours and is herself devoured, embraces and is violently embraced: and by the knot of love she unites herself with God, and is with Him as the Alone with the Alone." For the mystics, who can say such words, immortality is only the opportunity for knowing God more intimately: they are

indifferent to everything else which immortality may include.

Christ revealed God as a loving and patient Father; and His most comprehensive declaration about immortality is, "In my Father's house are many mansions." No relationship admits one so deeply into the trust which becomes a man towards God as the relationship of a loving child to his loving father. There we must assume that the child, admitting his lack of knowledge and experience, rests in the confidence that his father will provide for him what is wisest and happiest. It is of the essence of childhood that it should have this trust. And when any gift is given, the crowning joy of its receiving is that the child looks up to see the father's happiness because he has brought hap-

piness to his child. The child may not understand it at the time; but long after he recalls how his father looked on such and such a day when he thanked him with all the affection of his nature: just what the gift was may be forgotten; but that loving and radiant glance from father to child is the symbol of an eternal memory. Just so must it be when God throws open the door of immortality to His bewildered and surprised children. The height of all their rejoicing must be the love of God which they find made more intense by their gratitude. Through immortality they shall not merely discover the safety and repose which they desired, but they shall find in some wonderful and new way the desire of all desires, the Lord God. To have known Him, to have trusted

Him here, is beyond all other earthly good; and the exaltation of heaven is to transcend this earthly knowledge by the knowledge which starts out afresh upon the eternal journey towards completion, when we shall know even as we are known, when we shall see the King in His beauty in the land that is very far off, when we shall love Him indeed who first loved us.

VII

At the end of all human responsibility towards immortality I put the word Joy. Sometimes there comes a day in the open country when the sun shines on the lake and on the distant hills, when we hear the laughter of little children at play, when from the dome of heaven to the depth of the valley there

seems only serenity, and all that annoyed us yesterday is forgotten in the sense that to-day all is perfect. The earth is Paradise and we know that we walk with God in the splendour of His kingdom. Such days may be rare; but when they come they are the creative energy which we cherish against the trials and discouragements of the future. And because we rejoice for only one day out of many, we are able to carry joy into days of darkness. We know that the best of days, rare as it may seem, is the normal day, and the year is meant to be fused with the joy of it.

So it is that, when we have caught a genuine glimpse of immortality, all the experiences of life ought to be transfigured. We often shrug our shoulders when we read of the early Christians,

who were so intent upon entering the place which Christ had gone to prepare for them that they coveted the crown of martyrdom. Days of persecution were to them really as days of revelry. Stoical Roman gentlemen, quite used to bravery, were aghast at this new sort of bravery, — a bravery which did not shut its eyes and grind its teeth and clinch its fists, but went laughing and singing into the arena to meet the wild beasts. The immortal hope was not a speculation, a balanced probability: it was the most sure of all their realities; beside it death was but a child's bubble, vanishing into air. Even we, Christians as we think ourselves, are inclined to ask if these early martyrs did not take death a little too lightly. The only answer we can give is that when Chris-

tianity first burst upon the world it was such amazing good news, with all its hopes and promises, that its adherents were like the people who live through a perfect summer day, when the whole world seems to break into music, and one must sing and shout for joy, for only joy is real.

In these sterner days — not really harder but less joyous — a prophet now and then reminds us that it is our responsibility to ourselves, to the world, and to God to hold our faith in immortality "triumphantly, as a satisfying and inspiring conviction," — to hold it with great joy. The warning is given us that if we do not hold it in this way the hope may be lost to men; and the patient process of attaining it must be repeated in history. However this may be, joy is a

contagious quality; and nothing so convinces the world as a belief which is held with evident joy. The oppressive optimism which apparently has never entered any deep experience and which skips gaily over the surface of other people's trouble, cannot be dignified with the name of joy; it is only the twittering of incompetence. But when you see a courageous soul, sensitive and quick, going into the blackest of earthly pain, and, by laying hold of some unseen Power so close that it may almost be said to be within him, grasping an assurance which transmutes the misery into expectation, and, a little later, by a more intimate counsel with the unseen Friendship, transmuting the expectation into certainty, then you see a quality in life which seems to have all the

minor and all the major chords of experience blended into a harmony which may validly be called the expression of immortal joy. It is a joy which can have no jarring surprises; it is neither bird-witted nor blind. It looks steadfastly upon what many think to be only a sad or inexplicable scene, and cries with the prisoner of Bedford jail, "Glorious it was to see how the open region was filled with horses and chariots, with trumpeters and pipers, with singers and players upon stringed instruments, to welcome the pilgrims as they went up, and followed one another in at the beautiful gate of the city." Such is the joy which men can and do have who say, with heads thrown back and with eyes sparkling, "I believe . . . in the life everlasting."

This joy is made rational by the supreme fact that the God who makes heaven what it is also breathes His life into every particle of our earthly environment. If we may seize upon that most practical discernment, the discernment of the constant Presence of God behind and within all the outward sights and sounds of the world, then we shall know, not only what this life means, but what life means for ever and ever. And day by day, as we trust ourselves more unreservedly to this ultimate Companionship, we shall know as we never thought we could know how utterly God loves men. We shall see him brooding over all who have tangled their lives with folly and indulgence and hate; we shall see such love as a human face has showed only once in all

history; we shall see a determination to save these bitter and shameless beings by a love which will risk both the world and Himself for their reclaiming; we shall see a hope which surpasses all philosophy and theology and poetry and art — a hope which yearns so fervently and powerfully for the love of men that we, too, with our shallow human love and our little faith, must also leap to the hope that all humanity, even what we call the dregs, shall yet be gathered into the Father's embrace. If only, we cry, they could see what we see, how could they hesitate to abandon all their mawkish so-called pleasure, and arise to claim their heritage, breaking down, with scalding tears, and saying, "I will go to my Father."

People are sometimes afraid to trust

such a hope. They think that it may be wise for those who are bad not to be told how forgiving and patient and endlessly expectant God's love may be: these draggled and miry souls had better hear only of God's unappeasable justice — then they may be frightened and turn to Him. Even for those who are now living fairly good lives, too great emphasis on God's forgiving love might encourage slackness. So the hopeful are bidden to withhold their joy. But ponder this argument of those who plead for an expedient theory of ethics. Of two men which is the safer: is it the man who suspects that his father so far tempers his love with other qualities that he really does not love him at all, requiring of him virtue only that the father may not be disgraced by

an unworthy son, and therefore exacting duties with awful penalties for their non-performance: or, is it the man, on the other hand, who is confident that his father loves him so much that he will die rather than see him come to irretrievable grief,—yes, that his father loves him so much that he will die to make his love perfectly and unmistakably clear to him? Which of these sons will strive to conquer all his temptations? Which will be likely to say such words as Prince Hal cried out to his father, when he saw how great was his father's love for him?

> I will redeem all this . . .
> And in the closing of some glorious day
> Be bold to tell you that I am your son.

There can be no possible doubt of the answer. If human love can do a lit-

tle, in this sacred task of making the world good, how dare we, in the name of justice or in the name of righteousness, or in any other name below the Highest, set a limit to what the love of God can do?

Therefore, knowing that God is our Father, who loves us as the Lord Christ loved the erring and the lost; who feels for us such responsibility as that Good Shepherd felt when He went seeking all the strayed and sorry sheep until He found them; who is as eternally giving Himself for us as this same Christ gave Himself for His friends when He laid down His life for them because "greater love hath no man than this," — therefore our joy may be unbounded. He is our God now. He is the present solution of every earthly success and hap-

piness, of every earthly pain and affliction. And He is our God eternally. Because He is, and because He has called us to be, not servants but friends, He will bring us always closer to Himself. We cannot imagine the future; but Him we know: and knowing Him and His willingness to be responsible for it, it is our joy to leave altogether to his keeping our immortality. For the joy which includes and explains all other joys is the joy of knowing Him. In the last and best thought concerning the future we must say that our immortality is God.

THE END

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